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Daughters of Lilith:
Transgressive Femininity in Bram Stoker's Late Gothic Fiction

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Résumé

Daughters of Lilith: Transgressive Femininity in Bram Stoker's Late Gothic Fiction explore le thème de la transgression féminine dans quatre romans gothiques de Bram Stoker. En combinant les études féministes et les études de genre, cette thèse examine les différents visages de la dissidence féminine à travers *Dracula* (1897), *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903), *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909) et *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911). Dans ces textes, la transgression est incarnée par la femme hystérique, la mère monstrueuse, la femme exotique et la *New Woman*. De plus, le traitement de ces stéréotypes féminins révèle une certaine tolérance envers la dissension féminine chez l'auteur. Souvent perçu comme un écrivain conservateur, Stoker est plutôt qualifié de progressiste dans cette thèse. L'inclusion de personnages féminins forts et déterminés à travers ses romans ainsi que ses rapports avec plusieurs féministes et proto-féministes dans sa vie privée témoignent de sa libéralité envers les femmes. Sa largeur d'esprit semble d'ailleurs évoluer tout au long de sa carrière ainsi qu'avec la progression du mouvement suffragiste britannique, une période mouvante à la fin du dix-neuvième et au début du vingtième siècle.

Mots clés: Bram Stoker, littérature gothique, transgression feminine, femme hystérique, mère monstrueuse, femme exotique, *New Woman*

Abstract

Daughters of Lilith: Transgressive Femininity in Bram Stoker's Late Gothic Fiction explores the theme of feminine dissidence in four of Stoker's Gothic novels. Using a combination of gender studies and feminist theory, this dissertation examines the various faces of female dissension across *Dracula* (1897), *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903), *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909), and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911). In these texts, transgression is embodied by the figures of the female hysteric, the dead(ly) mother, the foreign female, and the New Woman. An examination of these feminine types displays Stoker's capacity to understand and empathise with non-conformist women. Often labelled a conservative author, Stoker is revealed in this dissertation to be more progressive than is commonly thought, as evidenced by the strong and wilful female characters in his fiction, as well as his relations with several feminists and proto-feminists in his private life. Stoker's more liberal and open-minded attitude towards women not only progresses over the course of his fiction, but also evolves alongside the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century suffrage movement in England.

Keywords: Bram Stoker, Gothic literature, transgressive femininity, female hysteric, deadly mother, foreign female, New Woman

Contents

Abbreviations

D	*Dracula*
JSS	*The Jewel of Seven Stars*
LS	*The Lady of the Shroud*
LWW	*The Lair of the White Worm*

For Charlie

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Introduction

> Writers of force and skill and judgment can convey abstract ideas of controlling forces and purposes; of embarrassing weaknesses; of all the bundle of inconsistencies which make up an item of concrete humanity.
> —Bram Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*

In the recent past, Bram Stoker's 1897 vampire tale *Dracula* has been rediscovered. Once ignored in scholarly circles, Stoker's fin-de-siècle Gothic masterpiece has moved beyond the horror fringes and insinuated itself within the Victorian canon. The author's seminal novel is the cornerstone work of vampire fiction, and has generated great interest within the field of Nineteenth-Century Studies while simultaneously possessing pop-cultural appeal. Though not the first vampire tale ever written, *Dracula* still became a trailblazer in its own right, having arguably established the genre of vampire fiction that continues to thrive to this day.[1] The character of Count Dracula has served as an inspiration for many a literary undead being. There are glimpses of him in everyone from the Eastern European immigrant Kurt Barlow to the homosocial Louis de Pointe du Lac, the alluring Southerner Bill Compton to the glittering Edward Cullen.[2] Stoker's famous villain is an unforgettable persona against which all other vampires must necessarily be differentiated.

[1] Long before *Dracula*, the vampire was an important mythological figure in Romantic and Victorian Literature. John William Polidori's 1819 story "The Vampyre" and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's 1872 novella *Carmilla* were particularly inspirational for Stoker. In "The Vampyre," the homosocial bond between Aubrey and Lord Ruthven recalls the equally suggestive relationship between Jonathan and the Count in *Dracula*. In *Carmilla*, the lesbian vampire Carmilla reverses traditional sex roles and shares many commonalities with *Dracula*'s weird sisters as well as the vampirised Lucy Westenra.

[2] The central antagonist in Stephen King's *'Salem's Lot*; the central protagonist in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*; a central character in Charlaine Harris' *Dead Until Dark*; and a central character in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*, respectively.

Although *Dracula*'s fame is now widespread, Stoker's more obscure works still linger in the realm of the shadows. Because these other texts are virtually unknown, many critics have reduced him to "a second-rate writer who wrote a great book" (Stuart 187). Certainly academics and *Dracula* aficionados alike would agree that the author's vampire tale merits the distinction of "a great book." A late Victorian horror novel presented in a pastiche of several styles, *Dracula* has never been out of print since it first hit shelves over a century ago, and remains a compelling work of Gothic fiction when many other horror tales have lost their bite.[3] What of the suggestion that Stoker was "a second-rate writer," though? The accusation, in my opinion, is somewhat unjust. Stoker's career as acting manager to Sir Henry Irving,[4] coupled with his position as director of the Lyceum Theatre, consumed him entirely. Considering his unwavering devotion to Irving in his twenty-seven years of service, it is rather extraordinary that Stoker found the time to write at all.[5] Over the course of more than three decades, he managed to pen twelve novels, four works of non-fiction, three collections of short stories, and many uncollected tales, before dying of exhaustion at the age of sixty-four.[6] Although his lesser-known texts are certainly not as polished as

[3] *Dracula* first made its debut on 26 May 1897, published in London by Archibald Constable. Carol A. Senf notes that *Dracula* "has never been out of print in English, and it has been translated into numerous foreign languages" (*Dracula: Between Tradition and Modernism* 13).

[4] Henry Irving was the most celebrated actor of the Victorian era, with a career spanning almost half a century. Many scholars contend that Irving served as a model for Count Dracula. Barbara Belford, for instance, notes that Stoker's famous character became "a sinister caricature of Irving as a mesmerist and a depleter, an artist draining those about him to feed his ego" (270).

[5] Stoker's dedication to Irving was such that he devoted more time and energy to the actor than to his own family. Belford claims that Irving "stole away Stoker's family life. But Stoker was a willing victim" (121). Stoker's 1906 biography of Irving, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, is a testament to his obsession with the actor.

[6] Stoker's official cause of death is cited in his 1912 death certificate as "Locomotor Ataxy 6 months, Granular Contracted Kidney, Exhaustion" (qtd. in Shepard 414). There exists some controversy surrounding the death certificate, which, according to Daniel Farson, was forged. He holds, "Bram died of tertiary syphilis," and further notes, "He probably caught syphilis around the turn of the century,

Dracula[7]—which took him over seven years to complete[8]—they should certainly not be overlooked. Indeed, Stoker produced not only one "great book" but many other memorable ones as well. These works stand as a testament to his talent as a writer, and are equally compelling portraits of life in the tumultuous world of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century England.

Through his writings, Stoker provided telling commentaries about the world around him. He engaged with several important societal issues occurring in England, including the changing position of women at the end of the long nineteenth century.[9] The author witnessed the rise of the suffrage movement, which saw women step out of their traditional roles as wives and mothers and forge new identities beyond the boundaries of the family hearth.[10] These revolutionary ladies undoubtedly inspired Stoker in his writings; he created a plethora of unforgettable female characters, each one responding in her own way to the various challenges of life in patriarchal society. Some of his most memorable dames include *Dracula*'s sexually repressed heroine Mina Harker, the lascivious temptress Lucy Westenra, as well as the beautiful but

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possibly as early as the year of *Dracula*, 1897. (It usually takes ten to fifteen years before it kills)" (233-34). Several scholars have since contested Farson's claim.

[7] Senf notes, "Although some of Stoker's other works—including *The Snake's Pass*, *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, *The Mystery of the Sea*, and *Famous Imposters*—also show the evidence of factual research, many others appear to have been tossed off during vacations from his rigorous work with Henry Irving's Lyceum Theatre or in his later years" (*The Critical Response to Bram Stoker* 1-2).

[8] Robert Eighteen-Bisang and Elizabeth Miller specify that Stoker's first notes for *Dracula* date back to 8 March 1890 (4).

[9] Mary Wilson Carpenter underlines that the long nineteenth century refers to "a period beginning with roughly the time of the French Revolution and usually extending beyond Queen Victoria's death in 1901 to the beginning or end of World War I (or the Great War), 1914-1918" (6). Stoker may accordingly be labelled a (late) long nineteenth-century author; his first novel, *The Primrose Path*, appeared in 1875, and his final publication, *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories*, was posthumously released in 1914.

[10] First-wave feminism began in England with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's 1792 treatise *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. From around 1870 until the First World War, women's suffrage was the main area of focus for feminists (Wingerden 24).

deadly brides of Count Dracula. Yet there are also many other significant characters outside of the author's famous novel. In *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, for instance, Stoker presents a fascinating rendering of powerful womanhood with the ancient Egyptian mummy Queen Tera. He further provides an alternative portrait of the feminine undead in *The Lady of the Shroud* with the elusive Teuta Vissarion, a girl at once analogous yet at the same time distinct from *Dracula*'s vampiric vixens. The author also conjures up a dark and dangerous portrayal of women with his antagonist Lady Arabella March in *The Lair of the White Worm*. These faces of femininity reveal that Stoker was not only adept at crafting vampiric characters, but also succeeded in fashioning a broad spectrum of other female foes.

Daughters of Lilith takes its inspiration, as the title suggests, from the mythical figure of Lilith, who preceded Eve as Adam's first wife according to rabbinic folklore.[11] Leila Leah Bronner relates how Lilith is demonised precisely because she is unwilling to yield to patriarchal power:

> This figure is vaguely mentioned in early midrashic literature, but her image is not fully developed until medieval and kabbalistic sources. These traditions describe Lilith as the first wife of Adam, like him made from the dust of the earth. Unlike her canonical successor, she refuses to be obedient to Adam and insisted on being his equal. A medieval source has her arguing with Adam over who should take the superior position during sexual relations. Refusing to accept the female inferior role, Lilith flew away and refused to return to Adam. God tried to persuade her to return, but she would not relent. Consequently, God made another wife when Lilith ran off, and she was called Eve. The medieval sources transform Lilith into a demon who harasses men and children at night. She is said to tempt men sexually, to be promiscuous, to give birth to

[11] The title of my dissertation is a nod to C.S. Lewis' 1950 classic *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. In the novel, Mr Beaver explains to Peter that the White Witch is not quite human. He remarks that she is "no Daughter of Eve. She comes of … your father Adam's first wife, her they called Lilith. And she was one of the Jinn" (65). Like the central antagonist of Lewis' well-known tale, many of Stoker's female characters may equally be envisioned as veritable daughters of Lilith who defy patriarchal norms, and who are consequently labelled demoniacal creatures.

> legions of demon babies, and to bring death to human beings; in short, she is the antithesis of female virtue. (33-34)

Lilith perfectly embodies Stoker's vision of feminine transgression, since she is the 'first' woman to question and resist patriarchal structures. Like the infamous demoness, the author's own daughters of Lilith act as veritable transgressors throughout his fiction. "Transgressive femininity" not only refers to lascivious conduct in the context of this dissertation, but also includes any behaviour that crosses socially established boundaries for Victorian, Edwardian, and post-Edwardian ladies, as when a woman fails to uphold the principles of her sex. This is consistent with the way in which transgression is envisioned within the Gothic literary tradition, where it is defined as the "crossing of social and aesthetic limits" (Botting 5).[12] Although Stoker's *Dracula* is a widely recognised work within the field of Gothic literature, the author's post-*Dracula* tales of terror should not be forgotten, as these novels also left their own unique marks upon the genre. In these texts, transgression may be perceived as a veritable act of resistance,[13] where several rebellious dames reject compulsory codes of comportment, and must ultimately face the wrath of their male counterparts.

Interestingly, Stoker's Gothic novels feature female monsters—transgressive creatures par excellence—in central or prominent roles.[14] In *Dracula* and *The Lady of*

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[12] Fred Botting further elaborates that "transgression is important not only as an interrogation of received rules and values, but in the identification, reconstruction or transformation of limits" (5).

[13] Andrew Smith contends that the Victorian body "resists power even as that power is imposed upon it … and in the resistance a form of knowledge, relating to the need for transgression, is produced" (*Victorian Demons* 159). Although Smith here discusses the parallel concepts of resistance and transgression within the context of the life and works of Oscar Wilde, the same could certainly be said of Stoker's own life and oeuvre.

[14] The trope of the monstrous woman is not unique to Stoker; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen reveals that women are often depicted in a monstrous light in various cultural and literary contexts. He posits that "women (*She*) and nonwhites (*Them!*) have found themselves repeatedly transformed into monsters, whether to validate specific alignments of masculinity and whiteness, or simply to be pushed from its

the Shroud, for instance, dissident femininity is embodied by the author's most memorable monster, the vampire.[15] *The Jewel of Seven Stars* further features an ancient Egyptian mummy as the central foe, and *The Lair of the White Worm*'s primary antagonist is an antediluvian lamia. Although the sexually unorthodox female wears many masks throughout the author's works, she is perhaps most recognisable in these particular texts, where the line between woman and monster is blurred. Another significant similarity between said texts is that they were produced in the late Victorian, Edwardian, and post-Edwardian periods, from the late 1890s until a little over the first decade of the 1900s.[16] This further distinguishes them from some of Stoker's earlier works, which fail to capture the sense of terror, unease, and alienation characteristic of his turn-of-the-century tales. In short, the selected novels under study share several notable similarities, making them unique within Stoker's canon.

Before further examining said texts, it is important to acknowledge that the author offered literary insights into his own fiction as well as the artistic works of his peers. If we take him at his word, Stoker wanted to be perceived as a prude, repeatedly ensuring friends and readers alike that *Dracula* was no carnal creation. In a letter sent to William Gladstone prior to the novel's publication, for instance, Stoker revealed that his vampire tale aimed primarily "to cleanse the mind," and assured him that "there is nothing base in the book" (Letter 48).[17] Shortly after *Dracula*'s release, the author also

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realm of thought. Feminine and cultural others are monstrous enough by themselves in patriarchal society, but when they threaten to mingle, the entire economy of desire comes under attack" (15).

[15] Noteworthy is the fact that in *The Lady of the Shroud*, Teuta Vissarion is eventually revealed to be human.

[16] Specifically, Stoker produced the works under study between 1897 and 1911.

[17] The letter was sent to Gladstone—Stoker's friend and the former prime minister of Britain—on 24 May 1897, two days before the release of *Dracula*. The letter accompanied an advance copy of *Dracula* (Belford 131).

noted in an interview that "high moral lessons might be gathered from the book" (Stoddard 185).[18] He further reiterated his puritanical message in a series of essays in which he called for artistic censorship.[19] In one such essay, "The Censorship of Fiction," he identified sexual misconduct as the leading cause of moral degeneration among England's youths, proselytising that "the only emotions which in the long-run harm are those arising from sex impulses" (158). Yet for all his tireless efforts to demonise bodily urges, Stoker led a very different life than he would have us believe. Indeed, he was a man who lived and breathed the theatre, and was constantly surrounded by actors who were veritable epitomes of Victorian and Edwardian vice. These individuals conducted affairs, had children out of wedlock, explored same-sex relationships, and repeatedly neglected socially established boundaries of proper decorum. Yet Stoker had nothing but praise for them in his memoirs, especially his female friends and acquaintances. All this points to a well-known conundrum in Dracula Studies: Stoker's ostensible conservatism in his writings is inconsistent with the liberalism he lived by in his personal life. Given these incongruous portrayals, I believe there is a need to re-examine Stoker's works to see how some of his more liberal values inform the representation of his female characters, and to explore the possibility that he was more accepting of transgressive femininity than is commonly thought.

[18] Jane Stoddard interviewed Stoker on 1 July 1897.

[19] Aside from "The Censorship of Fiction," Stoker produced several other censorship-themed essays that called for major reform in the theatrical world. In his 1908 essay "The Question of a National Theatre," for instance, he writes, "Drama and theatre have each educational possibilities for good or ill; it is for us to discriminate and to help" (75). He reiterates the need for prudery on the stage in his 1909 essay "The Censorship of Stage Plays." Here, he warns of the need to "take militant action … against such movements of reaction and decadence as are made by the defenders of indecency of thought and action" (985). Stoker thus repeatedly declares his intolerance for sexually explicit material in both literary and theatrical circles.

Since the 1970s, Stoker's works, and *Dracula* in particular, have been excavated from a broad spectrum of critical perspectives, ensuring the continued expansion of the field of Dracula Studies.[20] Areas of interest over the last few decades[21] include, but are not limited to, culture and politics (Auerbach 1995, Boone 1993, Glover 1996); science and technology (Byron 2007, Senf 2002, Wicke 1992); race and degeneration (Arata 1990, Davison 2004, Halberstam 1995); history and biography (Belford 1996, Florescu & McNally 1994, Miller 2000); psychoanalysis and medicine (Hughes & Smith 1998, Moss 1997, Mulvey-Roberts 1998); masculinity and homosociality (Harse 1998, Nyberg 2002, Schaffer 1994); and gender and feminism (Bronfen 1992, Ledger 1997, Wilson 1997). Criticism of Stoker's lesser-known texts has also emerged of late (Cain 2006, Senf 2010, Smith 2004). Of interest to the present dissertation, though, is a gender and feminist approach to Stoker's late Gothic fiction.

Contemporary Stoker scholars have naturally embarked upon gendered and feminist readings of his texts, with many holding that the author's works display a clear anti-feminist polemic. Tabitha Sparks, for instance, observes that *Dracula* supports "a return to an England purified of outsiders and a definition of femininity … contained and traditional," and views both prostitutes and New Women as the "symbolic targets" of the tale (131). Deborah S. Wilson similarly reads *Dracula*, as one of many texts which utilise "technologies of misogyny, for misogyny is what they

[20] One of the first critical commentaries on *Dracula* emerged in 1959, when Maurice Richardson famously purported that the novel was "a kind of incestuous, necrophilous, oral-anal-sadistic all-in wrestling match" (418). However, it was not until 1972, when a series of scholarly essays were published on *Dracula*—most notably Christopher F. Bentley's "The Monster in the Bedroom: Sexual Symbolism in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" and Carrol Fry's "Fictional Conventions and Sexuality in *Dracula*"—that the novel experienced a rebirth and began to be the subject of scholarly focus (Miller, "Coitus Interruptus: Sex, Bram Stoker, and *Dracula*" n. pag.).

[21] The present survey includes research in the field of Dracula Studies from 1990 onwards.

re(produce)," and further propounds that "the sexual subtext of *Dracula* … enacts misogynistic fear and loathing of female sexuality … Good women are asexual and to be rewarded with male protection and reverence; bad women are sexual and need to be punished" (106, 114). Salli J. Kline likewise concurs that Stoker attempts to reinstate traditional gender roles in his fiction, and labels him a "backward-looking solution seeker" who romanticises the past and views fin-de-siècle culture as degenerate (11). She reads *Dracula* as an "ultra-conservative reaction to modernism," and underlines that the Count's corruption of English women "is, allegorically speaking, to make 'New Women' out of them" (15, 144). These and many other critics hold that the author effectively supported a return to traditional gender roles, and claim that he was critical of women who challenged hegemonic norms.

Even though Stoker is often perceived as a close-minded conformist, his personal life suggests otherwise.[22] The author's friendships and acquaintances with forward-thinking women such as Ellen Terry, Charlotte Thornley Stoker, Geneviève Ward, and Pamela Colman Smith complicate and problematise the labelling of Stoker as a misogynist and/or anti-feminist writer. This view is shared by Stoker scholars Carol Senf, Nina Auerbach, and Stephanie Denetrakopoulos, for instance, who view the author as much more sympathetic towards women than most critics. Senf, who previously held that Stoker did not support the efforts of the New Woman, now

[22] Biographers often read Stoker as an individual who experienced sexual anxiety throughout his life. Barbara Belford contends, "In biography and fiction, Stoker variously has been given a frigid wife, a penchant for prostitutes (particularly during their menstrual period), a sexually transmitted disease, and inherited insanity" (x). Many scholars speculate that during the last decade of his life—when he produced his censorship writings—Stoker was suffering from syphilis, as previously noted, a disease that he might have developed as a result of his numerous liaisons with Parisian prostitutes (Murray 267). Many critics have interpreted his censorship-themed texts as attempts "to build societal structures that would prevent others [from] suffering his fate" (Murray 254).

contends that "many of the novels Stoker wrote after *Dracula* reveal that he was less frightened of independent women than is sometimes believed" ("Rethinking the New Woman in Stoker's Fiction" n. pag.).[23] Auerbach further underlines that despite the Count's predominance in popular culture, in the original *Dracula* "women secretly take the novel away from him," and ultimately become "modest personifications of divine and human truth" (*Woman and the Demon* 22, 24). Denetrakopoulos also sees a certain "brand of 'feminism'" emerging from *Dracula*, and while she acknowledges Stoker's tendency to remain "nostalgic about the woman of the 1850's," she equally maintains that "he admires and venerates Mina who represents the 'New Woman' of the 1890's" (108-9). Taking my cue from the latter school of thought, I contend that Stoker can be understood as a more feminist-friendly writer if his fictional Gothic texts and friendships with forward-thinking women are examined alongside each other. What emerges is the portrait of an author who appears more tolerant of feminine dissidence over time, and his evolution into a more broad-minded writer interestingly coincides with the rapid advancement of the suffrage movement in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century England. Although I am by no means attempting to label Stoker a feminist proper in this dissertation and acknowledge that he was in many ways a product of his time, a historicised examination of his fiction reveal him to be at least more sympathetic towards transgressive women than is frequently imagined, and this

[23] In *Bram Stoker*, Senf relates, "My initial response was that Stoker's 'treatment of women …does not stem from his hatred of women in general but … from his ambivalent reaction to a topical phenomenon—the New Woman,' and I still believe Stoker was thinking of the New Woman when he wrote *Dracula*" (66). Yet after studying Stoker's non-*Dracula* texts such as *Lady Athlyne*, Senf now believes that the author is more sympathetic to liberated women than she initially thought.

empathy is reflected in his relatively positive portrayal of dissident femininity across his works.

Daughters of Lilith: Transgressive Femininity in Bram Stoker's Late Gothic Fiction attempts to reconcile the apparent discrepancy in Stoker's fiction and personal life through an examination of the various faces of feminine dissidence across *Dracula* (1897), *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903), *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909), and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911). In these texts, transgression is embodied by the figures of the female hysteric, the dead(ly) mother, the foreign female, and the New Woman, defiant dames who were often modelled upon real transgressive women that Stoker admired and respected. This dissertation contends that the author often applauds—rather than categorically condemns—acts of patriarchal defiance, and illustrates how he is more sympathetic towards transgressive women than is often believed. Although the author initially seems to demonise defiant dames, upon further investigation it appears that Stoker subtly applauds acts of insubordination towards hegemonic structures. Despite the fact that non-conformist dames appear to be defeated at the end of his tales, the author suggests that it is the transgressive females themselves—rather than their masculine counterparts—who ultimately emerge triumphant. By rejecting previous readings of Stoker's fiction as strictly anti-feminist, I aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of the author's Gothic fiction, advancing that female transgressors may in fact be viewed as worthy opponents against their masculine foes, instead of being reduced to shameful subordinates. This dissertation equally examines Stoker's Gothic novels in chronological order from the late Victorian era to the post-Edwardian period, and also alongside the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century

suffrage movement in England. What one discovers is that Stoker's female antagonists and otherwise transgressive dames become more empowered over the span of the author's fiction, and in many cases are more sympathetically portrayed than their masculine counterparts.

Since Stoker was responding to important contemporary issues in his writings—including the emergence of the emancipated female—a gender and feminist approach to the author's texts becomes a compelling point of departure from which to examine his works. Gender and feminist critics Elaine Showalter, Jill L. Matus, Judith Halberstam, and Sally Ledger provide invaluable insights into the lives and literary representations of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century women, and together form the theoretical framework of my dissertation. These critics collectively hold that literary portrayals of women are unstable social constructs that reflect the fears, anxieties, and desires of the time. Just as Stoker was sensitive to the happenings of his day, Showalter, Matus, Halberstam, and Ledger all acknowledge that many nineteenth and twentieth-century works are reactionary responses to the historical moment in which they were produced. Grounded in the insights of these critics, *Daughters of Lilith* aims to shed new light onto Stoker's treatment of women in his fiction, and draw attention to some of his lesser-known texts, which currently account for less than one-third of the research covering the gamut of Stoker scholarship. As a case in point, a September 2012 search in the MLA International Bibliography database using the subject heading: "Stoker, Bram (1847-1912)" yielded a total of six hundred and thirty-three results. Of these, five hundred and thirty discussed *Dracula* (84%); fourteen discussed *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (2.2%); thirteen discussed *The Lady of the Shroud*

(2.1%); and nine discussed *The Lair of the White Worm* (1.4%). The clear lack of interest in Stoker's non-*Dracula* texts is problematic if we are to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the author and his time, and the present dissertation aims to fill this gap by including three out of four chapters that explore these other works.

Daughters of Lilith aims to contribute to Stoker scholarship in a number of ways. As previously noted, the majority of research in the field currently focuses on *Dracula*, and this is equally true with regards to feminist readings of the author's works, which again largely centre around his famous vampire novel, often leading to the labelling of Stoker as extremely conservative and even misogynistic. The inclusion of his other works in this study help to better contextualise the author and his time, and, as previously mentioned, enables a more enlightened portrait of Stoker to emerge. Also noteworthy is the fact that the present dissertation does not neglect to acknowledge Stoker's important representations of masculinity, thereby ensuring a more inclusive approach to his works. Another way in which the present dissertation contributes to the field is its unique approach consisting of a historicised examination of the author's life and times combined with original close readings of his texts. The novels under study are first situated within the women's movement, and key ladies in Stoker's personal life are examined in light of their influence and inspiration on his creative output. In terms of close readings, too, the present dissertation contributes new insights to well-known passages within Stoker's fiction, while simultaneously drawing attention to passages and aspects of his works that are often neglected or overlooked. Finally, the uniqueness of this dissertation lies in the manner in which it explores Stoker's selected

fiction in chronological order, from the late Victorian era to the post-Edwardian period. This method enables the identification of a veritable progression or evolution in the author's proto-feminist thinking, where it can be argued that his later works display a greater broad-mindedness than some of his earlier texts. *Daughters of Lilith* thus seeks to serve as a stepping-stone for future generations of Stoker scholars keen on expanding this fascinating yet relatively new field of study.

Daughters of Lilith explores Stoker's rather sympathetic vision of transgressive femininity in four chapters. Chapter 1, "It must be something mental": The Female Hysteric in *Dracula*, analyses the representation of female insanity in Stoker's definitive vampire novel. Using Showalter's findings on mental illness in women in *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980*, I display how Stoker illustrates the humanity of his madwomen by challenging contemporary Victorian views on reproductive lifecycles, archetypes of madness, and hypnosis. Chapter 2, "The spirit of her mother is within her": The Dead(ly) Mother in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, considers the portrayal of the mother figure in Stoker's tale of Egyptomania. Inspired by Matus' insights on motherhood in *Unstable Bodies: Victorian Representations of Sexuality and Maternity*, I uncover Stoker's empathetic depiction of the mother with examinations of maternal mortality, the "mother-spirit" and doppelgänger, and the trope of the deadly womb. Chapter 3, "I am not as other women are": The Foreign Female in *The Lady of the Shroud*, unveils the portrait of the racial Other in Stoker's lesser-known vampire novel. Bearing in mind Halberstam's observations on foreign ethnicity in *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*, I explore how Stoker is more tolerant towards non-English foreigners than is

often thought, especially in light of debates of the period revolving around othering, fallenness, and degeneration. Chapter 4, "She can play her game better alone": The New Woman in *The Lair of the White Worm*, addresses the image of the New Woman in Stoker's serpent-centred fable. Drawing on Ledger's vision of emancipated femininity in *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle*, I reveal how Stoker's New Woman is not consistently vilified in his novel and discuss the ideas of the angel in the house, animal imagery, and the masculinisation of the New Woman. Each chapter thus aims to explore the central representations of deviant womanhood emerging throughout the author's novels, and to frame said representations within the women's movement. With this brief overview in mind, one may now turn to an in-depth look at transgressive femininity across Stoker's late Gothic works.

Chapter 1

“It must be something mental”: The Female Hysteric in *Dracula*

> I was quite satisfied that there is no need for anxiety, but as there must be a cause somewhere, I have come to the conclusion that it must be something mental.
>
> —Dr Seward*, Dracula*

Over the course of the long nineteenth century, the female body became the subject of intense medical focus. Women who in any way disrupted social order were often diagnosed with hysteria—derived from the ancient Greek term for uterus—and an ailment generally thought to affect the second sex.[1] The concept of feminine madness was so prevalent that by the mid-Victorian era, female patients far outnumbered their male counterparts in madhouses across England.[2] In Bram Stoker's 1897 horror novel *Dracula*, the author gestures towards familiar nineteenth-century beliefs concerning feminine madness, yet at the same time subverts many of these paradigms by illustrating how women possess more agency than frequently believed. Stoker's simultaneous embrace and divergence from dominant Victorian ideologies is evident in his treatment of the female hysteric and her reproductive life cycles; her similarity to various archetypes of hysteria; as well as her portrayal as a hypnotised hysterical subject. Although Stoker describes the vulnerability of the madwoman in his text, he also reveals how she is stronger and more resilient than she first appears.

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[1] Showalter describes how hysteria was a mysterious illness in the Classical period, and remained elusive even at the start of the twentieth century:

> Throughout most of its medical history, hysteria has been associated with women. Classical healers … believed the uterus traveled hungrily around the body, unfettered—Monday in the foot, Tuesday in the throat, Wednesday in the breast, and so on—producing a myriad of symptoms in its wake … [By the mid-nineteenth century] hysteria remained a messy mystery … doctors … wrote about hysteria more than any other medical disorder … journalists … picked it up as a way of describing society. By 1900 hysteria had become widespread in the United States and Western Europe. Doctors explained the epidemic as a product of hereditary weakness and cultural degeneration. (*Hystories* 15-16)

[2] Showalter underlines that by the 1890s, there was a "predominance of women … [of] all classes of patients and all types of institutions; female paupers and female private patients were in the majority in licensed houses, registered hospitals, and the country asylums" (*Female Malady* 52).

Indeed, the author continuously shatters contemporary Victorian notions of feminine lunacy by displaying how his female characters often experience trauma that is externally caused rather than innately produced, and illustrates how women are often better at controlling themselves than men. Further, the author at times presents his male heroes in a negative light, and reveals the madwoman to be a victim of patriarchal domination. Turning to Elaine Showalter's understanding of mental illness in women as posited in *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980*, this chapter displays how Stoker's *Dracula* represents female insanity as a form of feminine transgression that highlights both the vulnerability but also the empowerment of women in the late Victorian Age.

In *The Female Malady*, Showalter explores the rise of the phenomenon of female hysteria, paying particular attention to the management of women identified as mentally ill towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Building on Michel Foucault's research on madness, Showalter similarly examines how institutions often serve as vehicles of oppression and social control, adding that the modern madhouse arose in large part to stifle dissident female power. Showalter contends that the Victorians invented "the domestication of insanity." She defines this on the one hand as "a taming of the brutish lunatic, a reassimilation of madness into the spectrum of recognizable human experience," and on the other hand as the "Victorian efforts to bring madness into the circle of the familiar and the everyday, and to restructure the systems for its treatment in domestic terms" (*Female Malady* 28). She is particularly interested in the treatment of mental illness in women between 1870 and

World War I,[3] which she identifies as "the golden age of hysteria" (*Female Malady* 129). She further asks rhetorically whether insanity "is simply the label society attaches to female assertion, ambition, self-interest, and outrage?" (*Female Malady* 72). Although, as Showalter notes, the diagnosis of hysteria was often used to label a myriad of physical and mental ailments, she also points out that some women exhibited outlandish behaviour as a way to empower themselves. She indeed posits that "female hysteria in late Victorian England had been a form of protest against a patriarchal society that enforced confinement to a narrowly defined femininity …" (*Female Malady* 172). The author adds that by the end of the Victorian era, the literary madwoman "who started out confined to the Gothic subplot … by the fin de siècle had taken up residence in the front room" (*Female Malady* 52).[4] Showalter further propounds that the Victorians differentiated between male and female manifestations of mental illness:

> Even when both men and women had similar symptoms of mental disorder, psychiatry differentiated between an English malady, associated with the intellectual and economic pressures on highly civilized men, and a female malady, associated with the sexuality and essential nature of women. Women were believed to be more vulnerable to insanity than men, to experience it in specifically feminine ways, and to be differently affected by it in the conduct of their lives. (*Female Malady* 7)

Hysteria was thus generally seen as an exclusively feminine disorder, and clearly differentiated from masculine manifestations of the illness. I suggest that Showalter's gendered concept of madness can be employed to examine Stoker's *Dracula*, and helps

[3] Tangentially, all of Stoker's novels were produced during this period.

[4] The idea of the confined female hysteric is perhaps best embodied by the figure of Bertha Antoinetta Mason in Charlotte Brontë's 1847 novel *Jane Eyre*. Jane describes Bertha as resembling "the foul German spectre—the Vampyre" due to her fearful appearance and behaviour (Brontë 371). This represents one of the first references to the vampire in the English novel.

display how his female characters are more positively portrayed than is often believed. Although traditional gendered views of hysteria can certainly be observed in Stoker's *Dracula*, the author continuously undermines Victorian paradigms of mental illness by displaying how his female characters go mad largely because of social—rather than psychological—phenomena that is beyond their control, and even suggests that they often handle traumatic situations better than men. Bearing in mind Showalter's theoretical framework, one may explore how madness is represented in Stoker's famous vampire tale, but not before a brief examination of the context and climate in which *Dracula* was produced.

It is indeed important to examine the historical events that were shaking the very cultural, social, and political foundations of England around the novel's production and publication, and to acknowledge Stoker's real-life feminist models that helped fashion his vision of womanhood in his famous vampire tale. In his text, the author created a plethora of complex and multi-dimensional female characters, some of which are undoubtedly based on real women and inspired by actual events. Consider, for instance, that Stoker began writing *Dracula* in 1890, set his novel in 1893, and published his opus in 1897 (Florescu and McNally x). Coincidentally, the 1890s constituted a period in which the women's movement in Britain began to snowball. In 1889 and 1890, when Stoker was beginning to draft *Dracula*, the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill was introduced in the House of Commons. Significantly, the Bill included the clause "that no woman shall be subject to legal incapacity in voting … by reason of coverture," making it the first suffrage bill that explicitly included married women (Holton 76). In 1893, when *Dracula* is set, Carolyn Nelson relates that the

National Women's Liberal Association was born, and the following year saw the formation of the Independent Labour Party, both organisations being largely favourable to the suffrage cause (xxiii). The year of *Dracula*'s release in 1897, the suffrage movement gained more supporters through the unification of various pro-suffrage societies under the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), led by Millicent Garrett Fawcett (Nelson xxiii). It is significant that many suffragettes were thought of as mad in the late Victorian imagination. As Showalter underlines, "Suffragist protest, especially when it involved working class women … was simply 'hysterical hooliganism.' The representation of the militant feminist and the hysteric were conflated in the popular press" ("Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender" 320). Thus, Stoker was exposed to and surely influenced by the increasingly organised women's movement, from his first draft of *Dracula* to the moment it hit shelves.[5]

Stoker also looked to his personal life for inspiration in the crafting of various fictional characters. Just as the famed actor Henry Irving served as a veritable model for Count Dracula,[6] his acclaimed acting partner Ellen Terry (1847-1928) may well have inspired the creation of the hysterical Lucy Westenra. In *Dracula*, Lucy is explicitly linked to Shakespeare's Ophelia, and there is also strong evidence to tie her to Sir Walter Scott's Lucy Ashton, two important Victorian archetypes of feminine

[5] Tangentially, the provisional title Stoker chose for his famous vampire novel was *The Un-dead*, and Dracula's name was set to be the quite unoriginal Count Wampyr. According to Belford, the name change was significant in securing *Dracula*'s legacy, since "a novel called *The Un-dead* would never have endured in the 21st century" (269).

[6] Many Stoker scholars consider Irving to be the central model for Dracula. In the novel, the Count is described as a "tall old man, clean shaven save for a long white moustache, and clad in black from head to foot" (*D* 21). He also has a distinctive face, with "a strong—a very strong—aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose" (*D* 23). His countenance in some ways resembles Irving's similarly aquiline features, and like the Count, Irving possessed "an incomparable power for eeriness" (Belford 71).

madness. Over the course of her highly successful career, Terry performed the roles of both Ophelia and Lucy Ashton on the Lyceum stage. While her performance of *Hamlet*'s Ophelia occurred at the start of her partnership with Irving in 1878, her performance of Lucy Ashton came later in 1890 with *Ravenswood*, the stage adaptation of Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* (Melville 263). In *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, Stoker reveals his fondness for Terry's Ophelia, highlighting her ability to perform the role as Shakespeare would have intended. He also describes her acting as far superior to any other Ophelia he had previously seen on stage:

> Her performance of Ophelia alone would have insured her a record for greatness; Irving never ceased expatiating on it … it was a delight to any one even to see her. No one who had seen it can forget the picture that she made in the Fourth Act when she came in holding a great bunch—an armful—of flowers; lilies and other gracious flowers and all those that are given in the text. For my own part, every Ophelia whom I have seen since then has suffered by the comparison. (2: 195)

Stoker here reveals his admiration for his friend's artistic talent, and one can surmise that she inspired his creation of the Ophelia-like Lucy in *Dracula*. He also contends that her impact could be felt even beyond the theatre. He writes, "I think that Ellen Terry fascinated every one who ever met her—men, women, children, it was all the same" (*Personal Reminiscences* 2: 192). Also noteworthy is the fact that Stoker cast Terry's daughter, the lesbian suffragette Edith Craig, as the first woman ever to play Mina Murray in his stage production of *Dracula, or the Undead*, which, however, never made it passed the first rehearsal at the Lyceum Theatre on 18 May 1897 (Klinger xlv, 547). It is significant that both mother and daughter identified as suffragettes, with Edith being more militant in her fight for women's rights (Melville 223). Ellen Terry herself acknowledged this, and in 1914 stated, "Of course you all

know I'm a suffragette. Of course I am, and so is my daughter, Edith Craig" (qtd. in Melville 222).[7] This suggests that Stoker admired and befriended non-conformist women and further used them as veritable models for his transgressive and in this case hysterical female characters. One may thus surmise that Stoker perhaps looks more favourably on his dissident dames than is often thought. It is rather curious that although Stoker identified himself as a sexually conservative gentleman, he was one of Terry's greatest admirers, despite her long list of Victorian vices; she was married three times, had children out of wedlock, conducted numerous affairs and even approved of her daughter's open homosexuality, making her a life "neither orthodox nor conventional" (Auerbach, *Ellen Terry* 25).[8] Yet in spite of this, Stoker has nothing but praise for her in his memoirs, claiming that they formed a close friendship that spanned several decades (*Personal Reminiscences* 2: 191). Indeed, Stoker might be said to sympathise with and celebrate the strong female figures that have long been categorised as degenerate visions of femininity. As we shall see in this chapter, a close examination of the author's non-conformist female characters reveals that they are more positively portrayed than is frequently imagined, especially when compared to their masculine counterparts. With this historical background in mind, one may proceed with an investigation of hysterical representations in *Dracula*, beginning with a brief comparative analysis of male hysteria.

[7] Auerbach indicates that "unlike other mothers, she [Ellen Terry] had no qualms about letting feminists educate her daughter" (*Ellen Terry* 374).

[8] Auerbach further reveals, "Ellen Terry was far more comfortable with Edy and Christopher's [aka Christabel Marshall] union than she had been at the idea of Edy's marriage … To the day of her death and beyond it as well, she presided over their life together: unlike most homosexual couples at the turn of the century, Edy and Chris were not outcast from the family, but welded to it" (*Ellen Terry* 389).

Male Hysteria

In *Dracula*, Stoker addresses the issue of male hysteria, displaying the Victorian belief that not only women could suffer from mental illness, but that at times men might also descend down into the depths of insanity. The author himself once admitted to suffering from "a violent fit of hysterics,"[9] and his most famous incarnation of mental illness is not female, but instead embodied by the lunatic R.M. Renfield, a patient at Dr John Seward's sanatorium in *Dracula*. Renfield is described as a "zoophagous (life-eating) maniac" who possesses "qualities very largely developed: selfishness, secrecy, and purpose" (*D* 71, 69). Dr Seward further detects, "There is a method in his madness" when he observes his patient collecting and consuming animal lives, in the hopes of becoming like his master Dracula (*D* 69). Often compared to a dog,[10] he represents extreme loyalty towards the Count, who in the end discards and destroys him. In many ways, Renfield is a model madman; there is a trace of lucidity about him despite his condition. Stoker portrays him as a victim of

[9] In *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, Stoker describes his reaction to a poem reading by Henry Irving. He admits, "So great was the magnetism of his genius, so profound was the sense of his dominancy that I sat spellbound … I burst out into something like a violent fit of hysterics" (1: 29-31). Stoker's admission that he experienced "a violent fit of hysterics" as a reaction to another man's poetry recital has naturally generated great interest and much speculation among his critics. Stoker then defends his erratic behaviour. He notes, "I was no hysterical subject. I was no green youth; no weak individual, yielding to a superior emotional force. I was as men go a strong man, strong in many ways" (*Personal Reminiscences* 1: 31). His vehement denial that he was "no hysterical subject" represents an attempt to distance himself from the very figure he has likened himself to moments before. As Howard L. Malchow underlines, "Stoker's own hysteria at his first meeting with Irving, and the need to portray this—to himself as well as to others—in terms that do not suggest the effeminate male … [is presented in such a way as] to avoid being 'misjudged'" (146). Stoker clearly recognised that his declaration of hysteria needed an explicative note of sorts, and felt compelled to justify his unusual bout of demonstrative affection. Yet the fact remains that Stoker's declaration was a rather dangerous avowal for a Victorian gentleman to make, since hysteria was generally regarded as an exclusively feminine illness. It thus stands to reason that the author—a worldly fellow—was placing himself in a precarious position by declaring that he had suffered from the infamous malady.

[10] Dogs symbolise loyalty and courage in the novel. For instance, three terriers kill several rats in the episode where the Count creates a rat infestation (*D* 222).

circumstance who is under a spell of insanity, rather than a person innately mad. Indeed, he succumbs to hysteria due to external social factors that are beyond his control.[11] It is also significant that Renfield does not remain consistently mad throughout *Dracula*; sensing his doom is approaching, he regains his senses and implores Dr John Seward to release him, yet to no avail. Dr Seward relates the sheer desperation in his plea for freedom:

> Let me entreat you, Dr Seward, oh, let me implore you, to let me out of this house at once. Send me away how you will and where you will, send keepers with me with whips and chains, let them take me in a strait waistcoat, manacled and leg-ironed, even to gaol, but let me go out of this. You don't know what you do by keeping me here. I am speaking from the depths of my heart, of my very soul. You don't know whom you wrong, or how, and I may not tell. Woe is me! I may not tell. By all you hold sacred, by all you hold dear, by your love that is lost, by your hope that lives, for the sake of the Almighty, take me out of this and save my soul from guilt! Can't you hear me, man? Can't you understand? Will you never learn? Don't you know that I am sane and earnest now, that I am no lunatic in a mad fit, but a sane man fighting for his soul? Oh, hear me! Hear me! Let me go, let me go, let me go! (*D* 217-18).

Renfield's cries ultimately fall on deaf ears and lead to his untimely death at the hands of Dracula (*D* 241). Halberstam points out that Renfield is among a few of the novel's characters, including Dracula, who "have only recorded voices," and further states that "he has been classified as insane, and his subjective existence is always re-presented by Dr Seward" ("Technologies of Monstrosity" 336). Renfield's utter helplessness in many ways aligns him with other female hysterics in Stoker's novel who are similarly

[11] The idea of externally caused insanity may also be observed with the character of Jerry O'Sullivan in Stoker's *The Primrose Path*. In the novel, Jerry's delusions are triggered by alcohol abuse. Stoker describes how "Jerry drank frightfully … and came home … in a state of semi-madness" (100).

silenced, and further reflects how those labelled mentally ill were often ignored and denied a voice once imprisoned within the asylum walls.[12]

Although Renfield is the only individual to be represented as almost consistently mad throughout Stoker's tale, other male characters experience bouts of insanity as well. Masculine madness is distinguished from feminine insanity in that it is generally not treated as an enduring illness, but instead regarded as a passing affliction. Even so, the male characters in *Dracula* are often represented as even more hysterical than their female counterparts. Stephanie Moss considers Jonathan to be, along with Lucy and Mina, one of the three central hysterics of *Dracula*, whose mental episodes effectively subvert Victorian gender norms (134). It is significant, for instance, that his traumatic experiences at Castle Dracula lead him to experience "violent brain fever," and later he becomes deeply distressed when he recognises the Count in the streets of London (*D* 95, 155-156). Stoker's hero perceives his period of mental strain as an embarrassing secret that he hesitates to share with others. To Mina he confesses, "I have had a great shock, and when I try to think of what it is I feel my head spin round, and I do not know if it was all real or the dreaming of a madman. You know I have had brain fever, and that is to be mad. The secret is here, and I do not want to know it" (*D* 99-100). Jonathan would prefer to forget—rather than fully acknowledge—his mental breakdown, since he views it as an emasculating experience.

Moreover, Stoker specifically employs the term hysteria to refer to the maniacal episodes of some of the men in the novel, a word choice that serves to feminise the

[12] Showalter indeed posits that "resistance to listening to women's complaints was widespread across a range of male-dominated institutions" in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century medical contexts (*Female Malady* 162).

author's otherwise strong and stalwart males. Van Helsing, for instance, experiences "a regular fit of hysterics" following Lucy's death, knowing full well that the curse of vampirism is upon her (*D* 157). Dr Seward reports the episode in his diary:

> The moment we were alone in the carriage he gave way to a regular fit of hysterics. He has denied to me since that it was hysterics, and insisted that it was only his sense of humour asserting itself under very terrible conditions. He laughed till he cried, and I had to draw down the blinds lest any one should see us and misjudge. And then he cried, till he laughed again, and laughed and cried together, just as a woman does. I tried to be stern with him, as one is to a woman under the circumstances, but it had no effect. Men and women are so different in manifestations of nervous strength or weakness! (*D* 157)

Van Helsing's reaction in this scene incorporates both feminine and masculine characteristics; while his laughing and crying together constitute traditional female responses, the fact that he stubbornly refuses to subside displays his headstrong manliness. This explains Seward's observation that men and women react so differently to life's struggles. Although Stoker admittedly includes several misogynistic passages in his text, one may understand these insertions as intentionally ironic rather than sincere.

Arthur Holmwood, like Van Helsing, experiences a mental episode due to Lucy's passing. After her death, Arthur turns to Mina for emotional comfort, and the latter reports that the normally brave and well-bred young man momentarily transforms into a childish hysteric:

> In an instant the poor dear fellow was overwhelmed with grief. It seemed to me that all that he had of late been suffering in silence found a vent at once. He grew quite hysterical, and raising his open hands, beat his palms together in a perfect agony of grief. He stood up and then sat down again, and the tears rained down his cheeks. I felt an infinite pity for him, and opened my arms unthinkingly. With a sob he laid his head on my shoulder and cried like a wearied child, whilst he shook with emotion. (*D* 203)

It is significant that Arthur is described as both hysterical and infantile in his passionate response to Lucy's death. Yet his temporary mental collapse soon passes, and he returns to his everyday persona of a respectable upper-class gentleman.

Such evidence of male hysteria in *Dracula* reveals the Victorian belief that this typically feminine affliction could affect men as well. As Paul Murray underlines, "Jean-Martin Charcot, of whom Stoker was well aware … saw hysteria as a disorder suffered by women or very impressionable men who were 'well-developed, not enervated by an indolent or too studious mode of life'" (73). Thus, male hysteria was acknowledged, yet was nevertheless viewed as divergent from feminine manifestations of the disorder. In short, Stoker's *Dracula* ostensibly shows how male hysteria is treated as a transitory state rather than an enduring illness. Yet a closer examination reveals that the author is not one to adhere to conventions, and his female characters are in fact better equipped at dealing with distressful situations than men.

Reproductive Life Cycles and Female Hysteria

During the long nineteenth century, women were thought to be at the mercy of their reproductive life cycles, and could not escape the experience of hysterical outbreaks at one point or another. Showalter describes how the majority of Victorian psychiatrists held that females were predisposed to madness at specific times during their lives. She underlines how "women were more vulnerable to insanity than men because the instability of their reproductive systems interfered with their sexual, emotional, and rational control," and also indicates that "theories of female insanity were specifically and confidentially linked to the biological crises of the female life-

cycle—puberty, pregnancy, childbirth, menopause—during which the mind would be weakened and the symptoms of insanity might emerge" (*Female Malady* 55). It was thus believed that hormonal triggers could negatively impact a woman's mental state of mind, and that certain periods in their lives were more precarious than others. In *Dracula*, Stoker addresses these phases with illusions to the menstrual hysteric, the maternal lunatic, and the aged madwoman. Yet the author reveals that feminine madness is often caused by external circumstances, or that women are able to respond to traumatic experiences better than men. Stoker thus initially appears to endorse Victorian conceptions of feminine madness only to shatter them soon thereafter.

Several episodes in *Dracula* gesture towards menses, and Stoker arguably employs vampirism as a metaphor for menstruation in the text. The first menstrual hysterics that come to mind are the three vampire women at Castle Dracula, who attempt to vampirise Jonathan in the famous seduction scene, and display how Stoker often uses Gothic elements—such as female monsters in a medieval castle—to address contemporary issues that were left unsaid in proper Victorian society. Jonathan initially believes them to be "ladies by their dress and manner," but they soon shed their ladylike demeanour when they try to 'kiss' him, which Stoker implies is more akin to an attempt at copulation (*D* 41). Drawn to the fair vampire's mouth, Jonathan describes the "moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth" (*D* 42). All of his senses are awakened as he describes "the churning sound of her tongue as it licked her teeth and lips … I could feel the soft, shivering touch of lips on the supersensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there" (*D* 43). One might imagine the weird sisters as

sex-crazed menstrual hysterics, and Stoker's intermingling of blood and teeth in this scene further points to the image of the *vagina dentata*. Phyllis A. Roth describes this irksome appendage as one where "the mouth and the vagina are identified with one another by the primitive mind and pose the threat of castration to all men until the teeth are extracted by the hero" (119-20). Understood in this light, Stoker's menstrually indisposed vampires may be seen as both hysterical and at the same time dangerous creatures, ones who pose a sexual danger to the men who cross their unholy paths.

Lucy Westenra is also portrayed as a crazed menstruating figure once she joins the ranks of the undead, yet Stoker depicts her in a more sympathetic light than the weird sisters. The children she attacks tellingly refer to her as the "bloofer lady,"[13] displaying how she is at once beautiful and at the same time bloody. In her guise as the bloofer lady, Lucy is also directly linked to Ellen Terry in the text, since the children she attacks later imitate her in "*al fresco* performances," and a correspondent for the *Westminster Gazette* reports that "even Ellen Terry could not be so winningly attractive as some of these grubby-faced little children pretend—and even imagine themselves—to be" (*D* 160). Moreover, Stoker further describes Lucy's "pointed teeth" and "bloodstained, voluptuous mouth," effectively signposting the vampire's oral cavity with the bleeding vagina (*D* 190). Lucy's debilitating condition is further reinforced by the fact that her bridal attire is sullied once she is vampirised. Dr Seward recounts, "By the concentrated light that fell on Lucy's face we could see that the lips were crimson with fresh blood, and that the stream had trickled over her chin and

[13] Robert Eighteen-Bisang and Elizabeth Miller note, "This term may have originated in *Our Mutual Friend* where Dickens uses the very similar 'boofer lady' as a childlike rendering of 'beautiful lady'" (281).

stained the purity of her lawn death-robe" (*D* 187). Her dishevelled appearance and erratic behaviour further correspond to Victorian notions of female hysteria, and suggest that "Lucy is remarkably indisposed by menstrual complications" (Mulvey-Roberts 86). Indeed, Stoker does at times adhere to the Victorian belief that menses might drive women to madness. Yet the menstrual Mina is treated quite differently than Lucy. Indeed, Mina's encounter with Dracula in the 'breastfeeding' episode suggests that she is better equipped to deal with the trauma of menstruation than her companion. This episode, which has Mina drink from Dracula's chest, is often interpreted as "a symbolic act of enforced fellatio" (Bentley 29). Yet one may also read the scene as a reversal of gender roles with a male nursing a female. Craft calls this Mina's "initiation scene," where "Dracula compels Mina into a world where gender distinctions collapse, where male and female bodily fluids intermingle terribly" (20). Further, the scene gestures towards the traumatic experience of menses for Mina, who moves from a state of childlike innocence to one of sexual maturity. In the text, Dr Seward describes her hostile encounter with Dracula:

> With his left hand he held both Mrs Harker's hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension. His right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white night-dress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man's bare chest which was shown by his torn-open dress. The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink. (*D* 247)

Mina's tainted white dress signals a loss of sexual innocence, and again hints at the image of the menstruating woman. Stoker further emphasises this image when Van Helsing attempts to bless her with a holy wafer. Predictably, Mina is burned by its touch. Viewing herself as a sullied creature, she utters, "Unclean! Unclean! Even the

Almighty shuns my polluted flesh! I must bear this mark of shame upon my forehead until the Judgment Day" (*D* 259). Mina's utterance resonates with contemporary Victorian attitudes about menstruation as an impure bodily process. Indeed, to be "unclean" was a euphemism for menstruation at the time, as John Elliotson—considered "an early authority" on menstruation—noted in 1840, "To regard women during menstruation as unclean is certainly very useful" (Showalter and Showalter 84). Ken Gelder adds that the bloody nightgown "and Mina's cry that she is now 'Unclean' … suggest 'ancient primitive fears of menstruation,'" and notes that the portrayal of Mina "as a menstruating girl … is the taboo that is violated in this scene" (70). To Gelder's understanding I would add that even Dracula appears to menstruate in this episode, which displays Victorian notions about male foreigners, and Jews in particular.[14] At the same time, the author reveals how gender is destabilised in the text; the Count embodies every phase of hysterical womanhood, namely the menstrual hysteric, the breastfeeding mother, and even the elderly hysteric, since he is a centuries-old vampire.[15] By blurring established gender boundaries, Stoker suggests that mental illness need not be understood as a categorically female condition, displaying how the text continuously subverts accepted Victorian ideologies. Further, as a breaker of taboos, Mina may also be linked to the equally illicit persona of the suffragette, who was also viewed by many as hysterical in late nineteenth-century England.

[14] For instance, many Christian Victorians believed that because of circumcision, Jewish men would menstruate four days a year (Davison 167).

[15] Van Helsing reveals that Dracula is "a man who has centuries before him," and adds that he "can afford to wait and to go slow. *Festina lente* may well be his motto" (*D* 264).

Moreover, it is significant that Mina's traumatic attack and her resulting hysterical outburst is transitory, and instead of weakening her, actually strengthens her resolve to destroy Dracula. Indeed, she is quick to regain her wits, and becomes an instrumental part of the team of vampire hunters, despite her constant fear that she may be contaminated with the curse of vampirism. She in fact contrasts with Jonathan who has remained in a stupor during the attack and who is clueless and hysterical when awoken by Van Helsing. Dr Seward recounts Jonathan's frantic reaction:

> 'In God's name what does this mean?' Harker cried out. 'Dr Seward, Dr Van Helsing, what is it? What has happened? What is wrong? Mina, dear what is it? What does that blood mean? My God, my God! Has it come to this!' and, raising himself to his knees, he beat his hands wildly together. 'Good God help us! help her! oh, help her!' (*D* 248)

Jonathan's erratic behaviour contrasts with Mina's comparatively calm demeanour, and it is evident that she deals with her trauma with strength and resolution. Comparatively, her husband, who is supposed to be her superior in every way, is psychologically broken and inconsolable, recalling his mental state when he escapes from Castle Dracula. Even after Mina's distressful encounter, Jonathan reports that she remains "the brightest and most cheerful of us" (*D* 258). Van Helsing even believes that Mina is able to think like a man without compromising her femininity. He asserts, "She has man's brain—a brain that a man should have were he much gifted—and a woman's heart. The good God fashioned her for a purpose, believe me, when He made that so good combination" (*D* 207). Though Mina has experienced a savage attack upon her person, she is able to regain her senses, and later becomes instrumental to Dracula's capture and destruction. She is, in fact, arguably more resilient than even her male counterparts. Indeed, Denetrakopoulos concurs that Mina is more tenacious a character

than her husband, and that despite "almost always slipping into the clutches of Dracula … she or Van Helsing always manage to repulse him" (105). Although Stoker admittedly employs the trope of the menstrual hysteric, he also suggests that women possess the capacity to overcome their physical ailments, and even hints that they are frequently more resilient then their male counterparts.

In addition to menses, Stoker also explores the idea of maternal hysteria in *Dracula*, and continues to problematise well-accepted concepts of female insanity. For the Victorians, madness was believed to be a matrilineal disease passed down from mother to daughter,[16] and new mothers were thought to be particularly susceptible to what was known as "puerperal insanity." Showalter relates, "The psychiatric explanation of puerperal insanity was that after childbirth a woman's mind was abnormally weak, her constitution depleted, and her control over her behaviour diminished" (*Female Malady* 58-59). Sally Shuttleworth adds that not only during and after pregnancy did a mother find herself vulnerable to puerperal insanity, but that this particular type of hysteria had the capacity to affect her at other stages during her life:

> The maternal function dominated womanhood not only with the actual bearing of children, or the wild outbreaks of an "ovarian perversion of appetite" or puerperal insanity that childbirth might occasion, but in all the daily operations of the mind and body throughout a woman's reproductive life. Female emotion, whether hysterical and out of control, or spiritually elevated and refined, sprang from the seat of maternity … (32)

Thus, Showalter and Shuttleworth both emphasise how the parturient mother was perceived as a volatile figure in the Victorian imagination. To their descriptions of

[16] In Mary Elizabeth Braddon's 1862 novel *Lady Audley's Secret,* for instance, Lady Audley exclaims, "She, my mother, had been, or had appeared sane up to the hour of my birth; but from that hour her intellect had decayed … the only inheritance I had to expect from my mother was—insanity!" (359).

puerperal insanity I would add that nineteenth-century doctors had little to no understanding of post-partum depression, which would have explained at least some of the cases of mental instability in women after childbirth, but was not recognised as a legitimate mental condition as it is today. It is interesting to see how Stoker explores but also challenges the trope of maternal hysteria across the spectrum of his oeuvre.[17]

Perhaps the best example of hysteria experienced by a mother in Stoker's novel is the scene in which the nameless matron at Castle Dracula comes to demand her child.[18] Knowing full well that her infant is dead, the mother breaks down outside the castle walls, displaying yet again how Stoker intermingles Gothic elements—such as the prototypical distressed female at a haunted castle—with more tangible forms of societal evils, such as child murder. Jonathan notes that this peasant woman has "dishevelled hair,"[19] and is seen "holding her hands over her heart as one distressed with running" (*D* 48). He goes on to describe her as an irrational creature that has all but lost her grip on reality:

> When she saw my face … she threw herself forward, and shouted in a voice laden with menace, "Monster, give me my child!" She threw herself on her knees, and raising up her hands, cried the same words in tones which wrung my heart. Then she tore her hair and beat her breast, and abandoned herself to all the violences of extravagant emotion. (*D* 48)

The mother is depicted as a pitiful woman who no longer possesses her senses, yet it is significant that her trauma is caused by external events that are beyond her control

[17] The figure of the mother will be explored at length in Chapter 2, outside the context of hysteria.

[18] In the text, Stoker strongly implies (without explicitly stating) that the Count kidnaps infants, places them in a bag, and returns to Castle Dracula where his vampiric brides devour them (*D* 43-44).

[19] Showalter accordingly underlines that for the Victorians "madness is represented by untidy hair" (*Female Malady* 87). The figure of Lucy Ashton is depicted in a similar fashion in *The Bride of Lammermoor*.

rather than an innate condition, effectively challenging contemporaneous thinking on maternal madness. The episode recalls the earlier discussed scene of Van Helsing's hysterical fit, where he comports himself "just as a woman does" (*D* 157). The nameless peasant woman is more justified in her hysterical outbreak than the learned doctor, however, and is destroyed even before she has time to recover from her breakdown. Jonathan deems that because the weird sisters have consumed her infant, she no longer possesses a reason for living. When she is later attacked by a pact of wolves, he notes, "I could not pity her, for I knew now what had become of her child, and she was better dead" (*D* 49). For Jonathan, the unfortunate peasant woman's brutal end perhaps gestures towards the idea of the poor being similarly silenced in an asylum setting. Showalter reveals that poor women formed the most significant group in asylums in England. For instance, by 1871, she underlines that "there were 1,182 female lunatics for every 1,000, male lunatics and 1,242 female pauper lunatics for every 1,000 male pauper lunatics" (*Female Malady* 52). Although it is worth remembering that Stoker generally did not view the poor and destitute in a favourable light,[20] he still represents the peasant mother as a rather pitiful and sympathetic being in *Dracula*. Even though she only appears briefly in the novel, she is important insofar as she represents a mother that might initially be thought of as mad, yet whose

[20] For instance, in his 1885 lecture "A Glimpse of America" (later published as an essay in 1886), Stoker displays his disdain for the homeless in America, whom he dismisses as "tramps" and "incurable drones":

> The tramp is, in America, a class by himself, tolerated simply for the time. In the vast population of the country there is, of course, a percentage of incurable drones; their number is not many, but they form a dangerous element, since they have no home, and are without the responsibilities which regulate in some degree their fellows; consequently, they are at times treated with ruthless severity, when, for instance, some outrage has been committed, particularly when a woman has been the victim. In some communities, tramps are warned off, and threatened with being 'shot on sight,' a summary process of the social law not holding a place in our code. (15)

hysterical outburst is actually caused by an event that is social rather than psychological in nature.

The mother at Castle Dracula is not the only woman driven insane by the loss of her child; it is equally suggested that Van Helsing's estranged wife, mentioned once in an aside, becomes an asylum-bound lunatic as a result of her son's death. The Dutch doctor reveals to Seward that Arthur resembles his deceased child, and that he feels an affinity with the young man because of this. He confesses, "My heart bleed for that poor boy—that dear boy, so of the age of mine own boy had I been so blessed that he live, and with his hair and eyes the same. There, you know now why I love him so" (*D* 157). The death of Van Helsing's offspring, it is implied, becomes the catalyst for Mrs Van Helsing's mental breakdown. The aged doctor reveals that his "poor wife" is essentially dead to him "but alive by Church's law, though no wits, all gone" (*D* 158). Van Helsing thus relates that his spouse experiences long-term debilitating lunacy as a result of her child's passing, and it is hinted that she is either under private care, or else has been confined to an asylum. Comparatively, the more rational Van Helsing, though eccentric, is able to move on with his life and work. Stoker thus suggests that the traumatic loss of a child might lead mothers, not fathers, down the spiral staircase of insanity. The idea of maternal insanity was thus firmly ingrained in late nineteenth-century thought, yet the mad peasant mother and Van Helsing's locked-away wife both reveal that Stoker recognises that hysteria is a more complex disorder than sometimes meets the eye. Through these characters, the author challenges the idea that a woman's reproductive cycles would necessarily wreak havoc on her mental health, and hints that women, like men, often become hysterical because of unforeseeable and uncontrollable

circumstances in their external—rather than internal—world. These two mad mothers also exemplify the injustices faced by women over the course of the nineteenth century, and Stoker's inclusion of these figures in *Dracula* might well be his way of addressing contemporary social ills.

As with the mother figure, the post-reproductive hysteric also makes an appearance in Stoker's text. Showalter reveals that during the nineteenth century "psychiatrists ignored the psychological and social impact of aging, and stressed feminine biology to explain insanity in older women. They claimed that the end of a woman's reproductive life was as profound a mental upheaval as the beginning" (*Female Malady* 59). Joan Perkin further notes that the termination of a woman's reproductive life cycles did not necessarily absolve her from hysterical fits in the Victorian mind:

> Liberation from menstruation and childbirth … signaled the end of a woman's importance as a reproductive creature … Doctors emphasized the changes in character that they said come with the menopause—a predisposition towards depression, melancholia, and hysteria, as well as the querulousness and peevishness that has long been associated with old age. (148)

Females were thus oftentimes thought of as slaves to their biological workings, and advanced age, like other phases, could signal the commencement of mental decline. To Perkin's understanding of the menopausal hysteric I would add that symptoms of insanity were sometimes believed to linger indefinitely throughout a women's post-menopausal years, as demonstrated with the character of the murderous old hag in Stoker's 1878 short story "The Burial of the Rats."[21] Yet in *Dracula*, Stoker provides a

[21] In Stoker's 1878 short story "The Burial of the Rats," for instance, the central antagonist is a deranged old crone whose evil intentions are only matched by her gruesome outward appearance. The

more sympathetic portrayal of post-reproductive hysterics, as they are once again set off by outside events that are beyond their control.

Madness in middle-aged and elderly women is represented early in *Dracula* with the minor characters of Mrs Westenra and the innkeeper's wife. Mrs Westenra is significant insofar as she is both a problematic mother and a middle-aged woman, making her an especially volatile figure. In the text, Mrs Westenra repeatedly places her daughter in danger, and is at least partially responsible for her death at the hands of Dracula. She does this by inadvertently acting as Dracula's enabler, allowing him to have access to her daughter, and by thwarting Van Helsing's efforts to protect her. Over the course of Lucy's illness, Mrs Westenra removes all the garlic from her daughter's room, thereby facilitating Dracula's ability to enter. To Van Helsing she proudly announces, "You must not take all the credit to yourself, doctor. Lucy's state this morning is due in part to me … There were a lot of those horrible, strong-smelling flowers about everywhere, and she had actually a bunch of them round her neck" (*D* 123). She then adds, "I took them all away and opened a bit of the window to let in a little fresh air. You will be pleased with her, I am sure" (*D* 123). Stoker suggests that Mrs Westenra is not as innocent as she appears, and perhaps is under Dracula's control, or else subconsciously wishes to harm her daughter.

The middle-aged matron Mrs Westenra also experiences a hysterical outbreak, thereby linking her once again to the post-reproductive hysteric.[22] In her last

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hero relates, "I scarce could tell which was the most hellish—the harsh, malicious, satisfied, cruel laugh, or the leering grin, and the horrible square opening of the mouth like a tragic mask, and the yellow gleam of the few discoloured teeth in the shapeless gums" (102).

[22] Mrs Westenra can indeed be considered middle-aged, at least by Victorian standards, since it is revealed that her daughter Lucy is nineteen when she receives her proposals (*D* 57).

memorandum, Lucy relates that her mother behaves irrationally when a wolf appears at the window. She observes, "Mother cried out in a fright, and struggled up into a sitting posture, and clutched wildly at anything that would help her. Amongst other things, she clutched the wreath of flowers that Dr Van Helsing insisted on my wearing round my neck, and tore it away from me" (*D* 131). With her dying breath, Mrs Westenra continues to harm her daughter. Lucy adds, "Then she fell over, as if struck with lightning, and her head hit my forehead and made me dizzy for a moment or two" (*D* 131). Mrs Westenra's erratic behaviour suggests that older women are perhaps more fragile, but not necessarily predisposed to hysteria. After all, her state of frenzy does not occur without provocation, which in this case is the sudden appearance of a wolf in an upper-class London neighbourhood. Thus Lucy's mother, though a minor character, displays how Stoker challenges several common notions on hysteria in his text.

Also embodying the traits of the post-reproductive hysteric is the equally minor character of the innkeeper's wife. Before Jonathan sets off for Castle Dracula, several individuals try to dissuade him from continuing on his journey and warn him of his impending fate. The innkeeper's wife is especially protective of him, as Jonathan relates:

> When I asked him [the innkeeper] if he knew Count Dracula, and could tell me anything of his castle, both he and his wife crossed themselves, and, saying that they knew nothing at all, simply refused to speak further … Just before I was leaving, the old lady came up to my room and said in a hysterical way: 'Must you go? Oh! Young Herr, must you go?' She was in such an excited state … When I told her that I must go at once, and that I was engaged on important business, she asked again: 'Do you know what day it is?' … she went on: 'It is the eve of St. George's Day. Do you not know that tonight, when the clock strikes midnight, all the evil things in the world will have full sway? Do you know where you are going, and what you are going to?' She was in such evident distress that I tried to comfort her, but without effect. Finally,

> she went down on her knees and implored me not to go; at least to wait a day or two before starting. It was all very ridiculous but I did not feel comfortable. However, there was business to be done, and I could allow nothing to interfere with it. I tried to raise her up, and said, as gravely as I could, that I thanked her, but my duty was imperative, and that I must go. She then rose and dried her eyes, and taking a crucifix from her neck offered it to me. (*D* 12-13)

The elderly superstitious dame functions as a sort of doomsday prophet who attempts to convince Jonathan to postpone his ill-fated trip.[23] Her display of madness does, to a certain degree, correspond to Victorian interpretations of insanity in post-menopausal women and/or elderly females. Many Victorian doctors held that lunacy in older women was manifested precisely in this way. Indeed, Showalter underlines, "When insanity occurred, it took the form of extreme delusions [some examples of which include] 'that the world is in flames, that it is turned upside down, that everything is changed, or that some very dreadful but undefined calamity has happened or is about to happen'" (*Female Malady* 59). The innkeeper's wife fits this mould in her role as frenzied harbinger of doom, and in this sense corresponds to the nineteenth-century understanding of hysteria in elderly women. Yet, as with the mad mothers before her, the innkeeper's hysterical fear and superstitious behaviour is not unfounded; Stoker suggests that she understands well that the young solicitor will not emerge from his journey to Castle Dracula unscathed. Even though Jonathan is critical and dismissive of the elderly woman's irrational fears, it is worth pointing out that it is in fact her

[23] The trope of the old crone as doomsday prophet can likewise be observed in Stoker's 1902 novel *The Mystery of the Sea*. In the tale, Gormala MacNiel is depicted as a mysterious and frightening elderly woman who possesses the gift of Second Sight. She is portrayed as a physically repulsive witch-woman who is obsessed with the idea of uncovering the "secrets and mysteries" of the sea. This "queer-looking" hag is described as a "great-eyed, aquiline-featured, gaunt old woman," and her eyes blaze "with a sort of baleful eagerness" (Stoker 11, 18). Gormala's monstrous demeanour, advanced age, and outlandish prophecies make her a veritable model of female insanity.

crucifix that saves Jonathan from Dracula's bite.[24] This displays how even the seemingly insignificant female characters in the novel play an important part in the overall plot, and suggest that women are often more empowered than sometimes meets the eye.

Although many of Stoker's works explore the trope of the crazed hag, the representation of post-reproductive hysteria in *Dracula* reveals the variety of ways—from subtle to extreme—in which madness was expressed in the nineteenth-century imagination. Both the innkeeper's wife and Mrs Westenra thus complicate the Victorian belief that a woman's age and life cycles could predict the state of her mental health, and suggest that women are not as predictable or weak as many Victorians held. Stoker's treatment of hysterical women may also be said to reflect the ways in which many suffragettes were equally deemed to be mad in late nineteenth-century England. In short, different phases of a woman's sexual development—such as menstruation, motherhood, and menopause/post-reproductive years—were thought to be responsible for hysterical outbreaks in the second sex. These biological triggers are alluded to throughout Stoker's text and are associated with the famous feminine "nervous disorder," a common term for hysteria over the course of the nineteenth century (Grimes 94). Stoker suggests that insanity in females is sometimes manifested from the inside out, rather than the outside in. Several female characters are accordingly portrayed as hysterical, such as the menstrually indisposed weird sisters, Lucy, and

[24] The crucifix given to Jonathan by the innkeeper's wife almost certainly saves his life in the episode where he cuts himself shaving. Jonathan reports, "When the Count saw my face, his eyes blazed with a sort of demoniac fury, and he suddenly made a grab at my throat. I drew away and his hand touched the string of beads which held the crucifix. It made an instant change in him, for the fury passed so quickly that I could hardly believe that it was ever there" (*D* 31).

Mina; the maternal figures of the peasant mother and Mrs Van Helsing; as well as the post-reproductive innkeeper's wife and Mrs Westenra. Although Stoker admittedly portrays hysterics from every period of their life cycle, a closer investigation of *Dracula* reveals that the author actually subverts many contemporary beliefs about maternal insanity by showing how madness in the second sex is often brought on by uncontrollable events in the world around them, and that displays of female insanity in the text are often justifiable.

Archetypes of Female Hysteria

Stoker continues to challenge contemporary Victorian medical opinion about female hysteria by modelling his characters in *Dracula* on nineteenth-century archetypes of insanity, only to subvert these categories soon thereafter. Although madness was thought to be an innate feminine condition in the Victorian imagination, Stoker suggests that it is at times brought on by external experiences and not so dissimilar from masculine manifestations of the illness. The author's famous vampire tale further displays how female hysteria is a reactionary response against the patriarchy, and has the potential to be an empowering coping mechanism for his heroines. Stoker links his female hysterics to specific archetypes of madness for the Victorians, but complicates his portrayal by showing that they are not always victims, but also empowered through their resemblance to said archetypes. Indeed, Showalter identifies three central archetypes of female hysteria during the nineteenth century. She deems, "The troubling, ambiguous nature of female insanity was expressed and perpetuated by the three major Romantic images of the madwoman: the suicidal

Ophelia, the sentimental Crazy Jane, and the violent Lucia" (*Female Malady* 10).[25] These nineteenth-century paradigms of madness were an important part of popular culture, and were easily recognised by contemporary audiences. Said characters were often featured on the theatrical stage, and as previously noted, Stoker was undoubtedly acquainted with them on account of Ellen Terry's performances of various madwomen over the span of her prolific acting career.

Shakespeare's Ophelia embodies the passive understanding of female hysteria in nineteenth-century thought, and Stoker directly refers to her in *Dracula*. Showalter underlines, "Ophelia was a compelling figure for many Victorian artists, writers, and doctors seeking to represent the madwoman" (*Female Malady* 90). In *Dracula*, Lucy draws a parallel between herself and *Hamlet*'s Ophelia in her diary when she exclaims, "Well, here I am tonight, hoping for sleep, and lying like Ophelia in the play, with 'virgin crants and maiden strewments'" (*D* 122).[26] Lucy's reference to this famous Shakespearean heroine is telling; by aligning herself with Ophelia, Lucy unwittingly portends her own demise. Elizabeth Miller relates, "Lucy, like Ophelia is powerless to prevent the tragedy that befalls her, as she slides inexorably towards death" (*Bram Stoker's Dracula: A Documentary Volume* 151). Succumbing to the dark powers of Count Dracula, Lucy's descent into vampirism may be thought of as a sort of suicide. Indeed, Stoker indicates that her favourite seat on the Whitby Cliffs stands over the grave of a suicide (*D* 68). Lucy may thus be thought of as a suicidal Ophelia, one who

[25] The "violent Lucia" to whom Showalter refers is the titular character from Gaetano Donizetti's 1835 libretto *Lucia di Lammermoor*, based on Sir Walter Scott's historical novel *The Bride of Lammermoor*. In this chapter I refer to the character upon which Lucia is based, Lucy Ashton.

[26] The scene is a reference to Ophelia's burial rites, where, even though she takes her own life, she is still "allowed her virgin rites, / Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home / Of bell and burial" (5.1.214-16).

is not simply a victim of masculine hegemony, but who willingly chooses to abandon the uncompromising world of patriarchal domination.

Shortly after her passing, Lucy exudes an ethereal beauty that is again reminiscent of Ophelia. The funeral attendant who prepares her body for the viewing remarks, "She makes a very beautiful corpse … It's quite a privilege to attend on her," and her coffin is described as "strewn with the wild garlic flowers, which sent through the odour of lily and rose" (*D* 147, 154).[27] Stoker's angelic depiction of Lucy recalls the scene in which Ophelia's death is reported in Shakespeare's play.[28] Showalter notes that Ophelia's suicide by drowning greatly contributes to her characterisation as a hysteric, underlining that her death "has associations with the feminine and the irrational, since water is the organic symbol of women's fluidity: blood, milk, tears" (*Female Malady* 11). Free-flowing bodily fluids—and their link to feminine hysteria—also assume a symbolic function in *Dracula* and many of Stoker's other works.[29] Yet Lucy is not as innocent as the damsel she is modelled upon. A Victorian version of Shakespeare's well-known heroine, Lucy may be said to represent "a sinister fin-de-siècle Ophelia who will later rise from the grave" (Pykett 173). Stoker certainly borrows from this famous Shakespearean archetype of insanity, but his own Ophelia-like Lucy is indeed a darker version of her famous predecessor.

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[27] Michael Ferber notes that in literature, the lily is "often paired with the rose, not least as a pleasing contrast of colors, for the lily has long been a synonym for 'white.'" He adds, "The lily can … represent virginity in any woman" (117-18).

[28] Queen Gertrude describes Ophelia as a beautiful otherworldly being as she dies, in particular stressing her connection to the mythical figure of the mermaid:

> When down the weedy trophies and herself / Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide, / And mermaid-like a while they bore her up; / Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes, / As one incapable of her own distress, / Or like a creature native and endued / Unto that element. But long it could not be / Till that her garments, heavy with their drink, / Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay / To muddy death. (4.7.145-54)

[29] This trope may also be observed in Stoker's 1898 novel *Miss Betty*, where it is revealed that "when she [Betty] wept with cause her tears were very tears of blood" (153).

In *Dracula*, Stoker draws upon yet another nineteenth-century emblematic madwoman in his construction of the undead Lucy: the character of Lucy Ashton from Sir Walter Scott's 1819 work *The Bride of Lammermoor*. During the nineteenth century, Lucy was utilised as a highly popular convention of feminine lunacy, not as a docile victim of the patriarchy like Ophelia, but instead as a vehement and voracious man-killer.[30] Showalter indicates how Scott's character stands for "female sexuality as insane violence against men," and is positioned at the other extreme of the insanity spectrum (*Female Malady* 14). Showalter further contends that Scott's Lucy is stronger than Ophelia, and represents an "escape from the bondage of femininity into an empowering madness" (*Female Malady* 14). This more powerful epitome of madness can certainly be observed in *Dracula*, where Stoker takes his inspiration from *The Bride of Lammermoor* to create a darker and more dangerous vision of the female hysteric. Miss Westenra may effectively be understood as an amalgamation of two iconic madwomen; in her human life she shares affinities with Shakespeare's Ophelia, and once she becomes a vampire, she more closely resembles Scott's Lucy. This is evidenced in the episode where the band of men discover her in her tomb. Dr Seward notes that the vampirised Lucy has become "a dark-haired woman … The sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness" (*D* 187). Lucy's body is transformed into a libidinal vessel, a sexual simulacrum of her former self. The episode gestures towards Scott's Lucy, specifically the metamorphosis

[30] Scott's Lucy Ashton, who has been forced to marry against her will, goes mad and attempts to murder the bridegroom on her wedding night. In stage adaptations of the novel, the heroine famously stumbles madly onto the stage in her bridal gown, covered in blood.

she undergoes after she attempts to kill her husband.[31] Stoker's Lucy is indeed redolent of the famous madwoman Lucy Ashton, a transgressive figure who similarly rejects societal gender conventions. Just as Scott's Lucy Ashton attempts to dispatch her husband on their wedding night, so too does Lucy Westenra try to lure her fiancée to certain death. Both women enact the Gothic convention of the alluring yet dangerous spectral bride, which Joseph Andriano refers to as the trope of the "animated corpse," or "legend of the dead bride," and describes as a female figure who is "often vampiric" or else "animated by a demon, if not by the devil himself" (69). In *Dracula*, Renfield might well be referring to this infamous persona when he proclaims, "The bride-maidens rejoice the eyes that wait the coming of the bride; but when the bride draweth nigh, then the maidens shine not to the eyes that are filled" (*D* 96-97). One may interpret this statement as a sort of sinister foretelling; the beautiful Lucy will soon be reborn into a hellish corpse bride, determined to destroy her beloved.

As predicted, Lucy attempts to seduce and vampirise Arthur when the band of men first encounter her in her tomb. Dr Seward relates the incident in his diary:

> She … advanced … and with a languorous, voluptuous grace, said:—'Come to me, Arthur. Leave these others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come!' There was something diabolically sweet in her tones, something of the tinkling of glass when struck, which rang through the brains even of us who heard the words addressed to another. As for Arthur, he seemed under a spell, moving his hands from his face, he opened wide his arms. She was leaping for them, when Van Helsing sprang forward and held between them his little golden crucifix. She recoiled from it, and, with a suddenly distorted face, full of rage, dashed past him as if to enter the tomb. (*D* 188)

[31] Scott describes the manner in which Lucy is discovered in a corner of a room "rather couched like a hare upon its form—her head-gear dishevelled; her night-clothes torn and dabbled with blood,—her eyes glazed, and her features convulsed into a wild paroxysm of insanity" (337).

Stoker's portrayal of the monstrous Lucy resembles Scott's iconic madwoman, insofar as both figures are depicted as insane by virtue of their desire to destroy their husbands, the men they are supposed to serve, not slaughter. These females attempt in their own ways to penetrate their would-be-husbands either with their dagger, in Lucy Ashton's case, or teeth, in Lucy Westenra's case. Because of their respective transgressions, these titular characters are similarly punished, both suffering untimely deaths around the time of their nuptials. In *The Bride of Lammermoor*, the heroine quickly deteriorates and dies soon thereafter. Comparatively, in *Dracula*, Arthur destroys Lucy—on what would have been her wedding night—in the infamous sexually laden staking scene:

> The Thing in the coffin writhed, and a hideous, bloodcurdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions. The sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercybearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it. His face was set, and high duty seemed to shine through it. The sight of it gave us courage so that our voices seemed to ring through the little vault. (*D* 192)

Lucy's eroticised killing is reminiscent of Lucy Ashton's equally suggestive passing.[32] Christopher Bentley notes that in *Dracula* "Lucy's reactions are described in terms

[32] Scott's description of Lucy's insanity and death indeed shares many commonalities with Stoker's own Lucy:

> The cares of the medical man were … employed in behalf of Miss Ashton, whom he pronounced to be in a very dangerous state. All night she remained delirious. On the morning, she fell into a state of absolute insensibility. The next evening, the physicians said, would be the crisis of her malady. It proved so; for although she awoke from her trance with some appearance of calmness, and suffered her night-clothes to be changed, or put in order, yet so soon as she put her hand to her neck, as if to search for the fatal blue ribbon, a tide of recollections seemed to rush upon her, which her mind and body were alike incapable of bearing. Convulsion followed convulsion, till they closed in death, without her being able to utter a word explanatory of the fatal scene. (Scott 338-39)

reminiscent of sexual intercourse and orgasm, and especially the painful deflowering of a virgin" (30). To Bentley's analysis I would add that the scene resembles a gang rape, with Arthur as the gang leader and the other men symbolising their silent complicity in the heinous act. Stoker reveals that women suffer psychological and at times physical aggression when they challenge social conventions and arguably displays that the male attackers in this scene are more monstrous, and perhaps even madder than Lucy herself. In the same vein, Lucy's beheading symbolises a 'cutting off' of the seat of reason, her ability to make decisions about her sexual life, and her resulting punishment for lascivious behaviour. Thus, Stoker's Lucy—like Scott's Lucy before her—pays the ultimate price for her refusal to abide by patriarchal norms, and in this sense can be viewed as more of a victim than an aggressor in *Dracula*. In another way, however, Lucy is empowered even in death, and her transformation from the passive Ophelia to the violent Lucy Ashton arguably mirrors the ways in which women were evolving from politically excluded citizens into empowered suffragettes and feminists at the dusk of the long nineteenth century.

The final Victorian archetype of hysteria that Showalter identifies and can be observed throughout *Dracula* is the figure of Crazy Jane. As a non-threatening debilitated dame who is hopelessly dependant upon the patriarchy, Crazy Jane was another popular model of feminine madness during the nineteenth century.[33] Showalter underlines, "Crazy Jane was a docile and harmless madwoman who devoted herself single-mindedly to commemorating her lost lover," and further notes that she became "the typical inhabitant of nineteenth-century Bedlam, not only the image of madness

[33] Amy Lehman notes that the play *Crazy Jane* "had a successful run at the Surrey Theatre in London in 1829" (27).

for women but the model of insanity for men as well" (*Female Malady* 13-14). In Stoker's famous text, the author arguably gestures towards the figure of Crazy Jane with his central heroine Mina.

The latter displays her Crazy Jane persona in the scene where she impatiently awaits news from her fiancée Jonathan Harker, who, unbeknownst to her, is imprisoned at Castle Dracula. Writing in her journal proves therapeutic for the distraught heroine, who grows more fretful with each passing day. She confesses, "I am anxious, and it soothes me to express myself here … I had not heard from Jonathan for some time, and was very concerned" (*D* 72). Thoughts of Jonathan consume her entirely, as shortly thereafter she admits, "I am getting quite uneasy about him, though why I should I do not know" (*D* 72). Mina's obsessive concern over her beloved resonates with the figure of Crazy Jane, who was seen by the Victorians as an "image of feminine vulnerability and a flattering reminder of female dependence upon male affection" (Showalter, *Female Malady* 13). Yet Mina's destabilising experience with Jonathan is but a foretaste of the comparatively extreme hysterical outburst she experiences upon hearing the news of Lucy's death. Mina partially blames herself for her friend's fate:

> If I hadn't gone to Whitby, perhaps poor dear Lucy would be with us now. She hadn't taken to visiting the churchyard till I came, and if she hadn't come there in the daytime with me she wouldn't have walked in her sleep. And if she hadn't gone there at night and asleep, that monster couldn't have destroyed her as he did. Oh, why did I ever go to Whitby? There now, crying again! I wonder what has come over me today. I must hide it from Jonathan, for if he knew that I had been crying twice in one morning—I, who never cried on my own account, and whom he has never caused to shed a tear—the dear fellow would fret his heart out. I shall put a bold face on, and if I do feel weepy, he shall never see it. (*D* 226)

Feeling guilty over Lucy's passing when she has done nothing wrong, Mina quickly becomes unstable. Yet the fact that she attempts to hide her hysterical episode by suffering in silence firmly aligns her with the figure of Crazy Jane. She is not the only character in the novel to bear a resemblance to this archetype, however; Jonathan may also be said to share similarities with Crazy Jane while trapped at Castle Dracula. Indeed, as Jonathan slowly slips into a state of insanity as a result of his confinement in Dracula's lair, his only comfort is the thought that a forlorn female lover may once have been in the same castle long before him, hopelessly longing for her beloved. In his diary he discloses, "My lamp seemed to be of little effect in the brilliant moonlight … after trying a little to school my nerves, I found a soft quietude come over me. Here I am, sitting at a little oak table where in old times possibly some fair lady sat to pen, with much thought and many blushes, her ill-spelt love-letter" (*D* 40). The image of a lovesick female here seems to help Stoker's hero quell his looming madness. He adds shortly thereafter, "I determined not to return tonight to the gloom-haunted rooms, but to sleep here, where, of old, ladies had sat and sung and lived sweet lives whilst their gentle breasts were sad for their menfolk away in the midst of remorseless wars" (41). Jonathan thus conjures up visions of melancholic females who share several affinities with the lovesick Crazy Jane, and arguably help him repress his looming madness. Yet as in many other instances, Mina deals with trauma far better than her husband. Indeed, she proves capable of masking her hysterical symptoms, and does not express her emotions in an outlandish manner as Jonathan does.[34]

[34] Crazy Jane may not only have inspired the construction of Mina and Jonathan in *Dracula*, but also makes a significant appearance in Stoker's less famous vampire story, *The Lady of the Shroud*. In

Amy Lehman notes that along with Ophelia, Crazy Jane's relative composure in the face of lunacy displays "how an ideal woman should behave, and when her fragile equilibrium was threatened, what her consequent madness … might look like" (27). Although it must be remembered that the female hysteric was always already transgressive in the Victorian mind, Crazy Jane was considered a more acceptable model of insanity to emulate when hysteria was inevitable. Even though Mina shares several parallels with Crazy Jane, it is worth noting that she is able to compose herself after her outburst, and returns to a state of normalcy soon after Lucy's death. In a sense, she displays far more self-control than Van Helsing and Arthur when they hear the news of Lucy's death, as previously discussed. Stoker thus once again suggests that the female hysteric might not be so dissimilar from the male hysteric after all, and even implies that the female of the species is better equipped to deal with distress than her male counterparts. In short, Stoker's references to the iconic madwomen of Ophelia, Lucy Ashton, and Crazy Jane illustrate how he addresses the issue of female mental health in *Dracula*, and that his vision of womanhood is far more complex than is often held. Whereas the author's early depictions of Lucy align her with the passive yet sexually suggestive Ophelia, as she transitions towards vampirism, she more closely resembles the deadly Lucy Ashton. At the same time, Mina may be said to bear several similarities to the figure of Crazy Jane, on account of the more subdued expressions of

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this tale, the figure of Aunt Janet—whose name is tellingly a variant of Jane—may be seen as one who channels this hysterical archetype due to her excessive and abnormal love for her nephew Rupert. An aged old maid, Janet admits to feelings of jealousy when she discovers that the beautiful maiden Teuta has replaced her in Rupert's affections. She reveals, "I used to think that whenever Rupert should get married … I would meet his future wife with something of the affection that I have always had for himself. But I know that what was really in my mind was *jealousy*, and that I was fighting against my own instincts, and pretending to myself that I was not jealous" (271, author's emphasis). Aunt Janet envisions herself as a sort of rival for Rupert's love, and in this way possesses similarities with Crazy Jane. Stoker thus clearly made use of this archetype of feminine madness across his writings.

hysteria that she displays throughout the text. Although Stoker links his heroines to various archetypes of insanity, male characters often prove to be just as mad in their violent and outlandish behaviour towards women. Further, Stoker reveals that his female characters are able to recover from their hysterical outbursts, and rarely suffer from long-term debilitating conditions.

Hypnosis and Female Hysteria

Aside from Stoker's use of famous archetypes of madness in *Dracula*, the author also draws a connection between the ideas of female hysteria and the practice of hypnosis in his famous novel. Revealing his knowledge of scientific advancements, the author displays how the female body became medicalised towards the closing of the nineteenth century. The best-known proponent of hypnosis during the Victorian era was the famed doctor Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893), a clinical neurologist who in 1862 became the Chief of Medicine at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris.[35] Charcot considered hypnosis to be the treatment par excellence for the female malady, and was widely regarded as the "first of the great European theorists of hysteria" (Showalter, *Female Malady* 147). Charcot purported that this form of mind control could either suppress or provoke hysterical symptoms in patients, and held that hypnosis could be

[35] Judith Pintar and Steven Jay Lynn relate the history of the hospital in question, noting how the institution evolved over the years:

> The Salpêtrière had a colourful history in France, serving successfully and sometimes simultaneously as a prison, poorhouse, and old folk's home in addition to housing the developmentally, neurologically, and mentally ill. During Charcot's tenure the Salpêtrière was going through dramatic institutional transformation. As part of its modernization it became a teaching institution with a new focus on research. It ceased to admit poor, chronically ill, or pregnant women, and began to welcome a patient population composed of thousands of elderly and mentally ill women, including at any one time a few hundred children, some of whom would spend their entire lives there, first as inmates and later, as staff. (77)

"a cause of hysteria as well as a cure" (Moss 127). Showalter elaborates upon the central beliefs of this famous doctor:

> While he believed that hysterics suffered from a hereditary taint that weakened their nervous system, he also developed a theory that hysteria had psychological origins. Charcot demonstrated that hysterical symptoms such as paralysis could be produced and relieved by hypnotic suggestion. Through careful observation, physical examination, and the use of hypnosis, Charcot was able to prove that hysterical symptoms, while produced by emotions rather than by physical injury, were genuine, and not under the conscious control of the patient. (*Female Malady* 147)

Charcot purported that hysteria, which he considered primarily a female illness, could be controlled with the proper treatment, and that hypnosis had the power to trigger or quell outward expressions of psychological distress. His work evidently left a significant mark upon Stoker, who explicitly refers to him in *Dracula*, and tellingly sets his novel in 1893, the year in which Charcot died. Stoker further mentions him as a distinguished guest of the Lyceum Theatre in *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*.[36] Although Stoker certainly weaves many of Charcot's ideas about female hysteria and hypnosis into the fabric of his text, the author also suggests that women can retain a certain amount of agency, even under the influence of the hypnotist.

In *Dracula*, Stoker directly refers to Charcot and hypnosis in the episode where Van Helsing muses upon the mysterious circumstances surrounding Lucy's death. In a discussion between Van Helsing and Seward, both acknowledge Charcot's scientific contributions. The elder Dr Van Helsing questions the younger Dr Seward's belief in

[36] Stoker notes in *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* that many prominent guests attended "'First Night' gatherings on the stage of the Lyceum after the play …" (1: 314). He adds, "Occasionally, when opportunity permitted and memory served, I jotted down—often only on my copy of the *menu*—the names of some of my fellow guests; and as I usually kept these interesting souvenirs, I am able to give a somewhat suggestive list" (1: 314-15). Stoker then goes on to provide said list, and mentions the famous Dr Charcot (1: 316).

esoteric phenomena and hypnosis is the sole practice that Seward believes has any scientific validity:

> 'I suppose now you do not believe in corporeal transference. No? Nor in materialization. No? Nor in astral bodies. No? Nor in the reading of thought. No? Nor in hypnotism—'
> 'Yes,' I said. 'Charcot has proved that pretty well.' He smiled as he went on: 'Then you are satisfied as to it. Yes? And of course then you understand how it act, and can follow the mind of the great Charcot—alas that he is no more!—into the very soul of the patient that he influence.' (*D* 171)

Of all the pseudosciences that Van Helsing mentions, hypnosis is the only one that can be backed with medical proof in Dr Seward's view. Yet, as Van Helsing attempts to illustrate, the boundaries between science and the supernatural are often blurred. The undead Dracula, for instance, employs a strategy of mind control to lure and overpower his victims, a method not so dissimilar to the approach of the Victorian hypnotist. Moss underlines that although "hypnosis was perceived as medical discourse" for the Victorians, there was also the perception that it was a form of witchcraft "which rendered victims helpless against the will of the hypnotist" (128). Thus, Stoker again employs supernatural and Gothic elements—such as illusions to witchcraft—to critique contemporary Victorian issues, such as the different and sometimes dubious treatments for the socially pervasive malady of female hysteria.

In *Dracula*, the Count utilises his hypnotic powers to call his chosen ones into unholy communion with him, yet Stoker suggests that the process may be viewed as a liberating, rather than imprisoning, experience for women. Auerbach labels the Count a "master-mesmerist," and emphasises that he uses his hypnotic powers exclusively "on women … we never see him mesmerizing a man …" (*Woman and the Demon* 16). Yet these spells may also be understood as a call to arms to break free from the confining

hegemonic world of late Victorian England. To begin, he induces Lucy into hypnotic trances on several different occasions. Even before she enters the legions of the undead, Miss Westenra's general inability to control her actions demonstrates how the monster holds sway over her. When she begins to be under Dracula's influence, she frequently murmurs "as if to herself … *apropos* of nothing," is in a perpetual "half dreamy state," and possesses an uncanny cackle (*D* 91, 94). Yet it is her somnambulist episodes more than anything that indicate an outside force is mesmerising her.[37] In one instance she recalls her bizarre encounter with a red-eyed creature while sleepwalking:

> I didn't quite dream, but it all seemed to be real … I remember, though I suppose I was asleep, passing through the streets and over the bridge … Then I had a vague memory of something long and dark with red eyes, just as we saw in the sunset, and something very sweet and very bitter all around me at once. And then I seemed sinking into deep green water, and there was a singing in my ears, as I have heard there is to drowning men, and then everything seemed passing away from me. My soul seemed to go out from my body and float about the air … there was a sort of agonizing feeling, as if I were in an earthquake, and I came back and found you shaking my body. I saw you do it before I felt you. (*D* 94)

This nightly rendezvous with Dracula resonates with a sexual encounter, where the emphasis on drowning gestures towards the mixing of bodily fluids, similar to the breastfeeding episode. It is worth noting, however, that being under hypnosis absolves Lucy from her libidinal indiscretions to some degree. Van Helsing notes, "She was bitten by the vampire when she was in a trance, sleep-walking … In a trance she dies, and in a trance she is undead, too" (*D* 179). This suggests, on the one hand, that Lucy

[37] The Victorians distinguished between somnambulism and hypnotism, labelling the latter a form of "artificial somnambulism" (Glover 78). Yet scientists perceived many similarities between these states as well. The somnambulist, notes William B. Carpenter, possesses "such control over his nervo-muscular apparatus, as to be enabled to execute … whatever it may be in his mind to do" (qtd. in Glover 78). Glover adds, "By extension, hypnotism is to be understood as 'artificial somnambulism' … a relay of impressions and bodily movements which also bypasses the conscious decision of the mesmerized subject" (78).

is not fully responsible for her indiscrete behaviour, and on another implies that to be in Dracula's company may be precisely what she desires. Indeed, her hypnotic state allows her to wander about at night to her heart's content, revealing that she may in fact be more than a helpless victim.

The Count's enthralling abilities further allow Lucy and Mina to explore the baser human instincts, and encourage them to release their animal within. Interestingly, the Victorian hypnotist could induce bizarre and even primal behaviour in his female patients, thereby linking the world of beasts with that of the hypnotised hysteric. Consider the scene in which Lucy is discovered by the "little band of men" in her tomb:

> When Lucy—I call the thing that was before us Lucy because it bore her shape—saw us she drew back with an angry snarl, such as a cat gives when taken unawares, then her eyes ranged over us. Lucy's eyes in form and colour, but Lucy's eyes unclean and full of hell fire, instead of the pure, gentle orbs we knew … As she looked, her eyes blazed with unholy light, and the face became wreathed with a voluptuous smile … With a careless motion, she flung to the ground, callous as a devil, the child that up to now she had clutched strenuously to her breast, growling over it as a dog growls over a bone. The child gave a sharp cry, and lay there moaning. (*D* 188)

Stoker's heroine—who possesses a combination of canine and feline attributes—transforms into a more primitive state when she embraces vampirism, displaying the manner in which the Count continues to hold sway over her long after their encounters. Mina, too, is said to resemble a kitten in the previously examined breastfeeding episode, where the titular vampire forces her to drink from his bosom. Also in this episode, Dracula claims ownership over Lucy and Mina, and notably aligns them with ravenous beasts. He proclaims, "Your girls that you all love are mine

already. And through them you and others shall yet be mine, my creatures, to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed" (*D* 267).[38] Although the Count makes it clear that female vampires are ranked below him,[39] he still offers them a kind of animalesque freedom that they could never hope for in the patriarchal world of the living. The association between women and beasts thus offers liberating possibilities, and seen in this light may not solely be meant to debase women in Stoker's text.

The Count's ability to transform proper English ladies into brutish creatures recalls the manner in which Charcot's hysterics similarly reverted to more primal states once induced into a hypnotic trance. Reports of mind control experiments conducted on patients at the Salpêtrière attest to this:

> Some of them smelt with delight a bottle of ammonia when told it was rose water, others would eat a piece of charcoal when presented to them as chocolate. Another would crawl on all fours on the floor, barking furiously when told she was a dog, flap her arms as if trying to fly when turned into a pigeon, lift her skirt with a shriek of terror when a glove was thrown at her feet with a suggestion of being a snake. Another would walk with a top hat in her arms rocking it to and fro and kissing it when she was told it was her baby. (qtd. in *Female Malady* 148)

Hypnosis was thus thought to bring about a state of hysteria in women, manifestations of which included regression to a more animalesque demeanour. Stoker in turn alludes to the idea of the hypnotised female hysteric in *Dracula*, where Lucy and Mina reveal their beast within through the Count's mesmeric influence.

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[38] This phrase represents one of the few times in the novel where Count Dracula speaks. Despite this, his perspective in the story, like Renfield's, is omitted. Veronica Hollinger indeed underlines, "In *Dracula*, the Other has no voice, no point of view; he merely *is*. While this, of course, ensures that he is all the more terrifying because almost completely unknown, it also effectively silences him" (218, author's emphasis).

[39] The fact that Dracula feeds upon adult women indicates that he is superior to his female followers, who feed upon infants and babies. A similar feeding ranking system is observed with Renfield, who consumes birds that feed upon spiders and flies.

Count Dracula is not the only male who endeavours to exert his hypnotic power over the female psyche. Dr Van Helsing also exhibits a desire to apply his mind control abilities upon Mina and contends, "Madam Mina's hypnotic power will surely help, and we shall find our way" (*D* 307). The symbolic patriarch and leader of the band of men employs hypnosis to retrieve vital information from her regarding the whereabouts of the Count, since after his attack upon her, she shares a powerful bond with him.[40] Like Lucy, Mina enters into a deeper level of consciousness due to her vampiric interactions. Elisabeth Bronfen relates, "Mina doubles Lucy's somnambulism in her hypnotic trances during which Dracula, as death, speaks through the medium of her body" (319). Although I agree with Bronfen that Mina's hypnotic episodes bear some similarities to Lucy's mesmeric rendezvous, I see Dracula using hypnosis differently than Van Helsing. Indeed, the doctor exploits Mina's gift and obliges her to divulge Dracula's whereabouts, whereas Lucy freely chooses to be under Dracula's hypnotic influence. Stoker thus at times presents Van Helsing as an evil hypnotist, a fact that is evidenced by his highly suggestive séances with Mina.

Dr Seward is equally interested in Mina's response to hypnotic treatments. He observes, "When the usual time came round Mrs Harker prepared herself for her hypnotic effort, and after a longer and more serious effort on the part of Van Helsing … she sank into a trance" (*D* 300). He later adds, "Van Helsing began his passes earlier than usual. They produced no effect, however, until the regular time, when she yielded with a still greater difficulty, only a minute before the sun rose" (*D* 300). When

[40] The bond between Dracula and Mina, however, is not romantic in nature, as many filmic adaptations of *Dracula* have portrayed. At most, Mina is glad to see the Count at peace once he is killed. She notes, "I shall be glad as long as I live that even in that moment of final dissolution, there was in the face a look of peace, such as I never could have imagined might have rested there" (*D* 325).

they arrive in Transylvania, Van Helsing reports that he lays Mina down on a makeshift bed and proceeds to hypnotise her once again. He reports, "I made a couch with furs, and Madam Mina, lying down, yield herself as usual, but more slow and more short than ever, to the hypnotic sleep" (*D* 314). These passages, particularly the emphasis placed upon the verb "yield" suggest that Mina is "yielding to desire," and that there is a sexual aspect to the séance that is reminiscent of the scene of Lucy's staking; just as Arthur pierces Lucy through the heart, Van Helsing similarly penetrates Mina's mind. Mina's hypnotic episodes may further gesture towards Charcot's public experiments with hysterics to demonstrate his hypnotic capabilities. Showalter reveals that the renowned doctor could, in his popular demonstrations, bring about "a prolonged and elaborate convulsive seizure in women" referred to as "*grande hysterie*, or 'hystero-epilepsy'" (*Female Malady* 150). One of the phases of this manifestation of hysteria was known as "*attitudes passionelles*."[41] Showalter relates how the hysteric was frequently viewed in a libidinal light, and indicates that "Charcot's interpretation of hysterical gestures … [were] linked to female sexuality … [This] was reinforced by Charcot's efforts to pinpoint areas of the body that might induce convulsions when pressed." She adds, "The ovarian region, he concluded, was a particularly sensitive hysterogenic zone" (*Female Malady* 150). Bearing this in mind, Stoker's portrayal of hysteria and hypnosis may be understood as a veritable nod to the work of Charcot. The hypnotised female hysteric is necessarily lascivious in Stoker's imagination. Lehman indeed points out that at the time "any woman involved in an activity which invited the male gaze might be assumed to be signaling her sexual availability" (172).

[41] Showalter defines this term as "a miming of incidents and emotions from the patient's life" (*Female Malady* 150).

The Count's mesmeric meetings and Van Helsing's suggestive séances exemplify how the science of hypnosis alternatively functions to stifle and liberate women in Stoker's late Gothic text.

Yet the doctor's power over his patient is short-lived; Van Helsing observes that once they have entered Transylvania, Mina becomes an unruly force he can no longer hypnotise, and thus cannot control. Outside Castle Dracula, she states with bizarre self-assurance that the weird sisters will not attack her, and she relates this to Van Helsing with a hysterical laugh that he describes as "low and unreal." When Van Helsing expresses his fear for her, she retorts, "Fear for *me*! Why fear for me! None safer in all the world from them than I am" (*D* 316). Mina's self-assurance is seen as a threat, and the weird sisters even try to entice her away from Van Helsing's influence by beseeching her to join them. Van Helsing relates the incident in his memorandum:

> They smiled ever at poor dear Madam Mina; and as their laugh came through the silence of the night, they twined their arms and pointed to her, and said in those so sweet tingling tones that Jonathan said were of the intolerable sweetness of the water glasses:—'Come, sister. Come to us. Come! Come!' (*D* 317).

Like the weird sisters and Lucy before her, Mina becomes a creature who is not easily controlled by patriarchal forces. Her refusal to yield to hypnotic influence arguably gestures towards suffragettes who similarly resisted being force-fed and treated with sedative and hypnotic drugs as a result of their hunger striking, an oft-used tactic to bring attention to the suffragette cause (Showalter, *Female Malady* 162-63). An examination of hypnosis in *Dracula* displays one of the many ways in which the author grapples with the idea of insanity in the second sex, and how the madwoman was

sometimes conceived of as weak and at other times thought of as an empowered force of reckoning in late Victorian thought.

Although the male gaze commands women to enter hypnotic states, this changes at the end of the novel, when Stoker gestures towards a veritable shift in power relations. In a note in the epilogue of *Dracula*, Jonathan updates the reader on life seven years after destroying the Count:

> Seven years ago we all went through the flames. And the happiness of some of us since then is, we think, well worth the pain we endured. It is an added joy to Mina and to me that our boy's birthday is the same day as that on which Quincey Morris died. His mother holds, I know, the secret belief that some of our brave friend's spirit has passed into him. His bundle of names links all our little band of men together. But we call him Quincey. (*D* 326)

Although on one level this note may be read as a simple update on the idyllic state of Jonathan's family life, on another the passage suggests that his angelic description is far from reality. Judith Halberstam reads the note as confirmation that Mina's child might well be fathered by not one, but several men:

> Even though by the end of the novel the vampire is finally staked … even though monogamous heterosexuality appears to triumph in the birth of Quincey Harker, the boy is as much the son of Dracula as he is of the "little band of men" … after whom he is named. Blood has been mixed after all; and like the "mass of material" which tells the story of the vampire but contains "hardly one authentic document," Quincey is hardly the authentic reproduction of his parents. Monster, in fact, merges with man by the novel's end, and the boy reincarnates the dead American, Quincey Morris, and the dead vampire, Dracula … ("Technologies of Monstrosity" 349-50)

Thus, Mina is not an idyllic vision of Victorian femininity, and may instead be seen as a more sexually nuanced figure. To Halberstam's understanding of Mina I would add that in naming her child after the "little band of men," she re-enacts—and perhaps on

some level even fulfils—Lucy's desire to wed all three of her suitors, a desire she voices when she asks, "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?" (*D* 60). Understood in this light, Mina experiences a form of symbolic concubinage through her blood ties to the male characters in the novel, and Dracula's inclusion in the blood-mixing reveals that the central monster, though destroyed, has fulfilled his earlier expressed threat; that the girls that they love in fact belong to him, and that within them he has planted his seed (*D* 267). Thus, by the end of the novel, Mina—who carries the hopes and aspirations of the dead Lucy within her—might begin to challenge the oppressive masculine forces that have long victimised her, and pass on these more liberal values to her young child. Taking my cue from this less traditional reading of *Dracula*, one may observe how in his other Gothic novels, Stoker suggests that what appears to be a patriarchal victory at the end of his tales may in fact be read as intentionally ironic, and that his female characters are the ones who truly emerge triumphant.

Stoker's *Dracula* presents several different façades of the female hysteric, displaying the author's engagement with the changing perception of women at the close of the long nineteenth century, a time of important social and political changes in the history of the women's movement, when authors either sympathised or demonised strong women who stepped out of line. Although Stoker distinguished himself as a sexually conservative author, a close examination of the female hysteric in *Dracula* reveals that his madwomen are more positively portrayed than is often thought. Inspired by Showalter's perception of mental instability in women as posited in *The Female Malady*, this chapter reveals how the female hysteric is viewed as a mentally

and physically volatile figure in Stoker's famous Gothic tale, but is also often depicted in a sympathetic light, and is generally able to handle traumatic experiences better than her male counterparts. This is first displayed through Stoker's representation of women through the different phases of her sexual life cycles, such as menstruation, motherhood, and menopause/post-reproductive years. The menstrually indisposed figures of the weird sisters, Lucy and Mina; the mad mothers such as the peasant woman and Mrs Van Helsing; as well as the unstable middle-aged/elderly characters of Mrs Westenra and the innkeeper's wife all initially appear to be slaves to their biological workings, but their hysterical outbreaks are ultimately revealed to be the result of trauma that is externally caused rather than internally produced. Next, Stoker addresses the different archetypes of female hysteria common in nineteenth-century imagination, such as Ophelia, Lucy Ashton, and Crazy Jane, stock characters who were well recognised by Victorian audiences. Stoker gestures towards these infamous madwomen with his central female heroines, Lucy and Mina, but at the same time shows how they can be empowered even in their hysterical condition. Finally, Stoker's allusions to hypnosis in the text reveal how medical science dealt with women diagnosed with hysteria. Dracula's mesmeric effects upon Lucy and Van Helsing's hypnotic sessions with Mina are presented in a lascivious light, with the hypnotised female represented as a sexually accessible individual. Stoker displays yet again through the characters of Lucy and Mina that the hypnotised hysteric is not always a victim of male domination as is oftentimes conceived, and can be envisioned instead as an individual at the reins of her sexuality. Thus, in his famous vampire novel, Stoker portrays the female hysteric as a transgressive figure who is more complex than an

individual who is simply ruled by her wandering womb. Female hysteria may ultimately be viewed as a form of feminine transgression in *Dracula*, as this illness is not only seen as an affliction but may also be considered a veritable act of resistance against patriarchal structures. Given that the women's movement was beginning to gain momentum in 1890s England, and that many of Stoker's female friends and acquaintances such as Ellen Terry and Edith Craig rejected Victorian codes of conduct for women, it is possible to read *Dracula* as a text that celebrates—rather than categorically critiques—dissident femininity in all its forms. In her defiance of behavioural norms for Victorian dames, Stoker's female hysteric ultimately helped shape perceptions of femininity at the end of the long nineteenth century. Yet the madwoman is hardly the only epitome of feminine transgression for Stoker; the mother figure is an equally important archetype of problematic womanhood in his writings, one that is worthy of further examination in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*.

Chapter 2

"The spirit of her mother is within her": The Dead(ly) Mother in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*

> I know well that the spirit of her mother is within her. If in addition there be the spirit of that great and wondrous queen, then she would be no less dear to me, but doubly dear!
>
> —Abel Trelawny, *The Jewel of Seven Stars*

Just as attitudes towards female hysteria were changing at the dusk of the long nineteenth century, so too were views on the role and function of the mother. At the time, the idealised image of the Marion-like matron was coming under scrutiny as women from different walks of life—including mothers—began challenging traditional hegemonic structures. In Bram Stoker's fiction, the mother figure is of central importance, and makes a noted appearance in the author's 1903[1] horror novel *The Jewel of Seven Stars*.[2] In this Edwardian tale of terror, an ancient Egyptian mummy embodies many of the fears and anxieties surrounding the matron in Stoker's day, yet, as with the female hysteric before her, the author also depicts the mother figure in a sympathetic light, suggesting he often supports—rather than outright rejects—dissident

[1] I examine the original 1903 edition in this chapter, rather than the amended 1912 version. The subsequent modifications—and the concluding chapter in particular—do not reflect Stoker's original authorial intent, since he was strongly encouraged to rewrite the ending of his tale. Senf relates, "Stoker was persuaded by his publisher to modify this horrifying conclusion to make it less bleak and hopeless (and modern editions continue to print the sanitised 'happy ending' which centres on the romance of Malcolm and Margaret rather than the deaths of almost all the main characters)" ("*Dracula, The Jewel of Seven Stars*, and Stoker's 'Burden of the Past'" 89). In contrast, Queen Tera kills off almost all the central characters, except Malcolm Ross, in the original 1903 edition.

[2] *The Jewel of Seven Stars* is the tale of a band of men led by Egyptologist Abel Trelawny, whose life mission is to resurrect an ancient Egyptian mummy and once powerful sorceress, Queen Tera. The story begins when the narrator, Malcolm Ross, becomes implicated in a series of mysterious events in the Trelawny home. When Mr Trelawny falls into a coma after an unknown intruder attacks him, his daughter Margaret becomes the primary suspect. As the tale progresses, the uncanny physical and spiritual resemblance between Tera and Margaret grows stronger. It is ultimately revealed that Margaret shares a dual existence with the mummy, and that she is essentially a phase of the Queen, who can bend Margaret to her will. In the end, Mr Trelawny and his team successfully resurrect the mummy, yet this colossal achievement is bittersweet; Tera subsequently destroys her resuscitators, save Malcolm, and escapes to the English countryside. *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, like *Dracula*, represents one of Stoker's horror tragedies that features a supernatural undead being as the main antagonist, but does not include a happy ending. Whereas *Dracula* ends with the apparent destruction of the monster, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* reverses this formula, and the monster emerges triumphant.

femininity in all its forms. In his text, Stoker explores the idea of problematic maternity in several ways. Inspired by Jill L. Matus' vision of the matron as outlined in *Unstable Bodies: Victorian Representations of Sexuality and Maternity*, this chapter explores the darker aspects of motherhood in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, touching on issues such as maternal mortality; the idea of the "mother-spirit" and doppelgänger; as well as the trope of the mother figure as a deadly womb, one who becomes an object of both fear and desire. An examination of the mother figure helps reinforce the idea that instead of blindly adhering to common notions of transgressive femininity, Stoker often supports and sympathises with the socially dissident woman in many of his late nineteenth and early twentieth-century works, and further reveals how his writings become more and more progressive over time.

In *Unstable Bodies*, Matus examines nineteenth-century biomedical and cultural representations of female sexuality with a particular focus on maternity and how these views of women function within contemporary literary texts. The author indicates how novels of the period "explore conceptions of female nature and ideologies of motherhood circulating in Victorian culture," and shows how such texts at once inform and are informed by the society within which they emerge (Matus 4). Matus underlines that "fictive works transform or help shape topical conceptions of sexuality," and further uncovers how the mother figure is both shifting and unstable in her various and often incongruous portrayals across Victorian fiction (5). The mother, according to Matus, is alternatively sanctified and demonised in nineteenth-century works, depending on whether she embraces or eschews socially accepted standards of idyllic maternity. As the title of her work suggests, Matus maintains in *Unstable*

Bodies that there exists, for the Victorians, a pervasive lack of consensus in the understanding of maternity and of the treatment of "birthing bodies." She not only focuses on "the bodies that biomedical and cultural discourses elaborated as unstable," but also emphasises how "the representations themselves … [constitute] an 'unstable body' of discourse" (12-13). Matus further underscores, "Conceptions of maternal instinct function to legitimate approved mothering behaviour, while constructions of deviance designate as unnatural the kind of mother that departs from the norms" (157). To Matus' contention I would point out that in the case of Stoker's writings in particular, deviations from idealised visions of maternity are often celebrated by the author, and blind compliance with societal norms is not as desirable a characteristic as first meets the eye. In light of Matus' insights on nineteenth-century maternity, one may similarly observe instability in the maternal representations in Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, where mother figures are alternatively depicted as victimised objects of pity and at other times become dark and destructive forces of reckoning. As with *Dracula*, Stoker suggests in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* that his dissident female characters may be viewed as more empowered than is often thought. Bearing this in mind, it is interesting to briefly examine how the women's movement was evolving around the time Stoker produced *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, and to acknowledge the importance of his own mother in helping to shape his vision of maternity in the text.

It is indeed helpful to consider how the women's movement was progressing as Stoker was writing his novel, and to explore how individuals in his own social circle were serving as inspirational models for his fictional female characters. To begin, the original edition of *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, set in contemporary Edwardian London

and Cornwall, was written during 1902, published in 1903, and an amended version—which until recently was considered the standard edition—was released in 1912. Unlike its Gothic predecessor *Dracula*, these editions of *The Jewel of Seven Stars* were produced at a time when Stoker had become a full-time writer following the closing of the Lyceum Theatre in 1902 (Senf, *Bram Stoker* 22). Yet, according to Senf, the ability to write full-time did not improve Stoker's artistic output as one might imagine; instead, his newfound financial insecurity negatively impacted the quality of his writing; a case in point being his willingness to compromise his artistic integrity by modifying the 1903 text of *The Jewel of Seven Stars* to please editors with a sanitised version in 1912 (Senf, "*Dracula*, *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, and Stoker's 'Burden of the Past'" 92, 89). Stoker's personal tribulations also came at a time of social and political uncertainty on a national scale; in 1901, the sixty-three year reign of Queen Victoria came to an end, and was followed by the brief though significant reign of Edward VII, who ruled until 1910. With the ushering in of the Edwardian period, the women's movement continued to grow steadily. In 1903, the year *The Jewel of Seven Stars* first hit shelves, Carolyn Nelson notes that the Woman's Social and Political Union (WSPU) saw the light of day, an organisation headed by Emmeline Pankhurst which stressed the need for real change with the slogan: "Deeds Not Words" (xxiii-xxiv). The author points out that Pankhurst transferred her passion for women's rights to her daughter, Christabel Pankhurst, who became a notable suffragette and feminist in her own right (xxxiv). This filial connection between two prominent Edwardian suffragettes perhaps inspired Stoker's own use of the mother-daughter motif in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, where Tera is envisioned as an empowering maternal force vis-à-

vis the daughterly Margaret. Yet by 1912, the year in which the sanitised version of the novel appeared, Christabel was forced to flee to Paris after the WSPU headquarters were raided by police, and would remain there until the start of WWI (Nelson xxiv). What is clear is that Stoker produced *The Jewel of Seven Stars* in a climate where women were demanding less talk and more action, undoubtedly contributing to the manner in which his female characters are fashioned in his novel.

Women in Stoker's own social circle also helped shape the author's vision of femininity in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. Since this chapter examines representations of mothers and mother figures, it is interesting to briefly explore the relationship Stoker had with his own mother. Charlotte Thornley Stoker (1818-1901) was by all accounts a positive role model with whom the author shared a close relationship, and several of Stoker's biographers underline that she was instrumental in shaping her son's literary career. During the first seven years of his life, when Stoker was bed-ridden with a chronic unidentified illness, Charlotte entertained him with Irish folk tales and spine-tingling true stories of her hardships during the 1832 cholera epidemic in Sligo, Ireland. Some of the stories described how she "heard the banshee cry when her mother died; of how some during the famine drank blood extracted from the veins of cattle, including the family cow" (Belford 18). Valente adds, "Stoker's transferential identification with his mother's life history was probably heightened … by the belief that his disabling childhood illness had resulted from contagion following in the potato famine's wake" (16). Without a doubt, Charlotte's stories had a profound impact on Stoker, and helped shape the horror writer he would eventually become. Indeed, Belford notes that Charlotte "provided the flamboyant genes," and was a source of

inspiration for her son long after her storytelling days were over. Stoker dedicated his 1895 novel *The Watter's Mou'* to her, and she predicted that *Dracula* "should make a widespread reputation and much money for you" (qtd. in Belford 274). For these reasons, many hold that Stoker's mother "haunts his writing," and the fact that she died only two years before the release of *The Jewel of Seven Stars* suggests her legacy might well be felt in the text (Belford 28).

Her influence on Stoker aside, it is also significant that Charlotte may be thought of as an individual who embraced feminism, but only to a degree. The suffering she witnessed in her youth in Sligo inspired her to campaign for rights for women and the poor after her child-rearing years (Moss 143). Glover adds that she became known in her native Ireland as "a social reformer and workhouse visitor" (9). Yet Charlotte may not have felt so passionately about women's rights when it came to her own kith and kin. Belford reveals, "One family anecdote attributes to Charlotte a quote that she didn't care 'tuppence' for her daughters' advancement," and her primary concern was for her dowryless daughters to secure fortuitous marriages (26). Although Charlotte certainly believed that change for women was inevitable, it is safe to assume that she would not have embraced the kind of militant feminism that Emmeline Pankhurst advocated. Nevertheless, Charlotte's socialist tendencies display that Stoker's most important role model was a woman of strength and resolution, suggesting that his forceful female characters may in turn be read in a more positive light. Bearing in mind the instrumental role that both Stoker's mother and the growing women's movement played in inspiring his writings, one may proceed with an

examination of maternal representations in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, but not before a brief look at how the father figure is portrayed.

The Father Figure

At the closing of the long nineteenth century, the understanding of fatherhood in many ways differed from that of motherhood, a concept that Stoker addresses in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. The father was historically viewed as head of the family, an individual whose presence was integral to the proper structure of the home, and children were seen as paternal belongings. Barbara Z. Thaden reveals, "During most of the nineteenth century, children were considered property for which someone must be fiscally responsible, and because their mothers could not be expected to support them or to be responsible for their debts, their 'natural' guardians were considered to be their fathers" (135). Despite the fact that family patriarchs possessed property rights over their children, they seldom had pivotal roles in their upbringing. The father thus generally held a symbolic—rather than practical—function within the household.

In *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, the central patriarch Abel Trelawny is initially presented as an absent father, a figure who is physically and emotionally removed from his child. The distance conveyed between father and daughter in Stoker's tale is in keeping with contemporary long nineteenth-century understandings of English family dynamics, where the father was cold and distant, and many family memoirs of the period attest to this (Tosh 97). Even when fathers were physically present in their children's lives, men were regarded as unfit caretakers, especially for the very young. In the event of the mother's death, children were often sent away to be cared for by

relatives or nannies (Mitchell 143). Consequently, losing one's mother often meant by extension the loss of the father as well, a sense that is conveyed throughout *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. It is revealed in the backstory of the tale that Mr Trelawny did not have a pivotal role in his daughter's upbringing. As an infant, Margaret was expelled from the family home, and although she received monetary support, she obtained no emotional investment from her father. Mr Corbeck indeed relates that his friend, Mr Trelawny, never cared to form a bond with his daughter:

> The child had been put out to nurse, and Mr Trelawny had so far recovered from the shock of his loss that he had set himself to take up again the broken threads of his life and his work … Since he received that cable in the shipping office at Alexandria I have never seen a happy smile on his face … He told me very little about his daughter; but that two forces struggled in his mind regarding her was apparent. I could see that he loved, almost idolised her. Yet he could never forget that her birth had cost her mother's life. (*JSS* 144-45)

Margaret may be regarded as an abandoned child, at least on an emotional level.[3] Clive Leatherdale accordingly observes, "Margaret is an orphan, sustained in her father's absence by his money" (*JSS* 144). Although regarded as the cornerstone of the homestead and as the sole family provider, Mr Trelawny is also portrayed as a reserved and restrained father. The lack of a close connection between the two is again conveyed when Mr Trelawny falls into a coma. Margaret informs Doctor Winchester that she is only beginning to get to know her father as a young woman. Visibly distraught, she reluctantly admits, "I—I have only recently come to live with my Father; and I know so little of his life or his ideas," and later adds, "My Father never told me anything of his affairs" (*JSS* 27, 69). Margaret further reiterates her feelings of

[3] Orphaned children abound throughout Stoker's fiction. In *Dracula*, for instance, Mina is deeply affected by Mr Hawkins death, viewing him as a father figure. She notes in a letter to Lucy, "I never knew either father or mother, so that the dear old man's death is a real blow to me" (143).

regret and disappointment for having been denied a filial relationship, and confesses, "Unhappily I am in great ignorance of my Father and his life. I only came to live with him a year ago; and I know nothing of his affairs" (*JSS* 88). Malcolm similarly emphasises how Margaret and her father are only beginning to get to know each other. He relates, "These two proud, strong people, though father and daughter, had only come to know each other when the girl was grown up," and calls attention to Margaret's "yearning to be closer to the father whom she loved" (*JSS* 166, 158). By stressing the lack of a long-standing bond between father and daughter, Stoker suggests that the Edwardian family is often characterised by partition and a sense of alienation between relatives, and that the father is not as redeeming a figure as he first appears.

Stoker further takes aim at the distant and uninvolved father by drawing attention to his erudite activities that serve to highlight his utter ineptitude as a parent. Indeed, the emphasis placed upon Mr Trelawny's academic achievements implies that he has failed as a father. Consider the scene in which Eugene Corbeck informs Margaret that her father is a gentleman of great learning:

> He is a real patron of the arts; no mad Egyptologist can ever hope for a better chief! … I have been several times out on expeditions in Egypt for your Father; and I have always found it a delight to work for him. Your Father, Miss Trelawny, has a rare knowledge. He sometimes makes up his mind that he wants to find a particular thing, of whose existence—if it still exists—he has become aware; and he will follow it all over the world till he gets it. (*JSS* 89-90)

What is implicit in Corbeck's complimentary portrait of his friend is that a man of Abel Trelawny's repute could not possibly be burdened with the duties of childcare, and that he should be excused for not having been an exemplary father. Mr Corbeck intends for Margaret to accept this apology of sorts, but her repeated attacks on her

father suggest otherwise. Mr Corbeck's description is in line with the long nineteenth-century notion of fixed sex roles. As Matus underlines, "The world of knowledge and ideals is symbolically the realm of the Father. Feminine affections and the yearnings of womanhood … are associated with the Mother" (218). Matus stresses how individuals relegated various tasks to the different sexes, and male and female functions would seldom intercept. Because of perceived divisions in gender roles, the image of the distant father permeates throughout many long nineteenth-century literary texts. Thus, in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, Stoker refrains from sanctifying his male heroes, and instead proves capable of critiquing the failures of the patriarchy, albeit in a subtle fashion. Indeed, one may understand Mr Trelawny's prolonged absence from his daughter's life as one of the factors that lead her to turn against him, in her desire to seek retribution for years of emotional neglect. Stoker's critique of the father figure in this sense represents a departure from traditional Edwardian views of fatherhood, where men were expected to uphold the values and valour of traditional hegemonic masculinity. Bearing in mind Stoker's critical attitude towards the father, one may now turn to an examination of maternal representations in the text.

Maternal Mortality

Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, like many literary works of the period, grapples with the issue of maternal mortality and the trope of the dead mother, a figure whose absence has important repercussions on the lives of the characters left behind.[4] An examination of the issue of maternal mortality reveals much about long nineteenth-

[4] In Stoker's *Miss Betty*, for instance, the heroine Betty Pole's childhood home is described as a "motherless household" (2).

century attitudes towards women and their bodies. To begin, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* features dead and deadly mother figures; Mrs Trelawny, who experiences childbed death and the ancient Egyptian Queen Tera, who becomes an undead mother substitute. Malcolm relates how Margaret is connected to both women:

> She had been … born of a dead mother during the time that her father and his friend were in a trance in a tomb at Aswân. That trance was presumably effected by a woman; a woman mummied, yet preserving as we had every reason to believe from after experience, an astral body subject to a free will and an active intelligence. With that astral body, space ceased to exist. The vast distance between London and Aswân became as naught; and whatever power of necromancy the Sorceress had might have been exercised over the dead mother, and possibly the dead child. The dead child! Was it possible that the child was dead and was made alive again? (*JSS* 213)

Stoker here addresses the problem of maternal mortality, which at the time was often attributed to "puerperal fever, also known as childbed fever, blood-poisoning or metria" (Dever 12). In reality, these afflictions were, for the most part, simply caused by "poor domestic standards of hygiene and low standards of obstetrics and midwifery" (Wohl, *Endangered Lives* 13). When the mother survived the ordeal of childbirth, she might well be venerated and linked to "Western culture's highest mother," the Madonna or Blessed Virgin (Matus 228). However, if pregnancy and parturition did not go according to plan, the mother was regarded in a significantly different light, sometimes even blamed for her lot.

Only a brief glimpse of childbirth and childbed death is provided in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, displaying Stoker's willingness to broach a sensitive subject deemed improprietous for many of his contemporaries. Depictions of various stages of pregnancy leading up to motherhood were indeed considered unsuitable material for literary texts over the course of the nineteenth century (Matus 1). Similarly, the death

of an *accouchée*, as the unfortunate mother was labelled, was often ignored or overlooked. Mary Wilson Carpenter notes that it is notoriously difficult to obtain precise numbers on childbed deaths during the latter part of the nineteenth century:

> Whether delivered in a hospital or at home, maternal and infant mortality rates were extremely high. In the second half of the century, between four and five mothers died for every thousand births … this statistic almost certainly does not represent the real toll of maternity, as statistics did not include deaths from miscarriage (which could be as dangerous as childbirth). Also, the cause of death after childbirth was sometimes described so vaguely as to be useless for purposes of classification, and in order to reduce their mortality statistics, some hospitals, midwives, and doctors failed to identify deaths from hemorrhage or infection as connected to childbirth, especially if the death occurred some weeks after delivery. (163)

There was thus a noted hesitation on the part of doctors and midwives to admit that they might have played a part in the deaths of the mothers under their care. To Carpenter's contention I would add that, like the phenomenon of menstruation examined earlier in the context of *Dracula*, childbed death was considered a taboo subject for the Victorians and Edwardians, making open discussions about the problem difficult. Yet Stoker does not shy away from taboos in his writings, and suggests in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* that women often paid the ultimate price for the unwitting neglect of medical professionals. This attitude of intentional ignorance with regards to the plight of women also impacted their offspring. Stoker's reference to Margaret as the "dead child" speaks to the related phenomenon of high infant mortality rates during this period, and how the loss of the mother due to childbed death often spelled doom for the newborn as well.[5] Anthony S. Wohl indicates that "the health of the mother was

[5] In the event, however, that there was a choice to be made between mother and baby, nineteenth-century medical professionals in theory adhered to the motto that "the value of the mother's life must be allowed the preëminence" (King 210).

an enormously important influence on the health of the infant and its chances for survival" (12). Around the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the toll of infant mortality in Britain remained high. For instance, between 1891 and 1901, around 153 infants perished for every 1000 babies born (Wohl 11). As this statistic displays, death associated with pregnancy, labour, and delivery impacted not only the mother, but also affected her baby's chances of survival as well.

In addition to the problem of infant mortality, medical error similarly contributed to high fatality rates among childbearing females at the time. Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* arguably grapples with this phenomenon, as it is implied that Margaret's mother has been killed off by Queen Tera, who promptly takes her place as the central mother substitute of the tale. Mr Corbeck recollects, "At Alexandria, Trelawny found waiting a cable stating that Mrs Trelawny had died in giving birth to a daughter. Her stricken husband hurried off at once by the Orient Express … When I got to the house, the funeral had long been over" (*JSS* 144). Mrs Trelawny's rushed interment does not provide her husband with the possibility of further investigation into the mysterious circumstances surrounding her death, which might otherwise have pointed to Tera as culprit. As Leatherdale contends, "Tera can kill from afar," and "she can vary her methods, killing directly and indirectly" (144). The idea that a powerful force could end Mrs Trelawny's life during the birthing process, and that her death be accepted simply as tragic—rather than criminal—itself gestures towards the occurrence of mother-slaying by medical professionals, whose blunders and inability to provide quality obstetric care frequently resulted in the loss of their female patients. Mulvey-Roberts reveals that the concept of the "killer doctor" was widespread in the nineteenth

century and underlines, “The notion of surgeons as trained assassins and doctors as ready to bury their mistakes [had] long been commonplace” (88). Accordingly, an accurate number of childbed deaths over the course of the long nineteenth century caused specifically by medical oversight is notoriously difficult to obtain. Carolyn Dever indicates that “the very preventable nature of childbed death, particularly in a historical period so shaped by ideologies of womanhood, inflects medical documents with palpable anxiety about the relative guilt of obstetricians and midwives” (13). She elaborates that medical professionals were known to fabricate diagnoses:

> The anxiety of medical culpability in mother-slaying inflects even the driest statistical tabulations of mortality rates … Obstetricians and midwives alike … [had] a great deal at stake in evading the blame and guilt associated with the death of an *accouchée*, particularly in the context of debates concerning the transmission of infections such as puerperal fever, while definitions of “childbed death” were cast vaguely enough to offer ample alternatives for the death certificate.
> (Dever 14-15)

The fact that many doctors and midwives were essentially guilty of manslaughter—and that their crimes went unpunished—further serves to reinforce how the parturient mother was objectified throughout the course of the long nineteenth century. To Dever’s findings on childbed deaths I would add that women of the period were often thought of as nothing more than birthing vessels, with little regard paid to their health, well-being, and general right to life.

Moreover, a female’s suffering in childbirth was regarded by many as the mother’s own fault, known as the so-called “curse of Eve.” Even towards the closing of the long nineteenth century, Christian doctrine continued to proselytise why corporeal agony was a natural and fundamental part of the birthing process. Claudia Nelson

reveals that "a verse from Genesis, 'in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children,' was sometimes invoked to show that suffering in childbirth was part of God's punishment of the daughters of Eve" (47). Although Queen Victoria had advocated for the widespread use of chloroform to help alleviate suffering in childbirth,[6] religious doctrine still greatly impacted the world of science and medicine. Matus observes, "According to medical experts, the suffering of women in childbirth was due to their 'artificial habits of life' and not to the 'form and make' that nature bestowed on them" (38). The medical establishment held that labour was generally without danger, but simultaneously warned that "where nature's laws were often forgotten or violated, or 'where the constitution is impaired by the luxury or dissipation of modern times,' the process of childbearing is attended by danger" (Matus 38). Thus, many individuals believed that if a woman was morally upright, no harm could come to her in childbirth. Complications, it was thought, only arose among females who strayed from the path of righteousness. Yet in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, it is interesting that Mrs Trelawny does nothing to deserve her fate, suggesting that Stoker eschews the notion that childbed death was a form of punishment from above for dissident dames. Given that there was such an erasure of the epidemic of maternal mortality in Stoker's day, it is telling that he took the time to acknowledge the untold story of the parturient mother in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. What this suggests is that the author, who is often dismissed as misogynistic in his writings, was in fact troubled by the plight of many mothers, and

[6] Claudia Nelson elaborates, "Queen Victoria's use of chloroform for the births of her final two children … made the alleviation of pain under such circumstances more or less acceptable, although debates over chloroform's safety continued for some time" (47).

wanted to acknowledge and perhaps even raise awareness of the subject of women's sexual health in his fiction.

In addition to childbed death, the idea of maternal abandonment can also be observed in Stoker's mummy tale, where Mr Trelawny leaves his wife in the advanced stages of pregnancy to seek out Tera's tomb. Mr Corbeck reveals, "Mr Trelawny was, at the last, loth to leave his young wife whom he dearly loved; but she, who loved him equally, knew his longing to prosecute the search," and further notes, "So keeping to herself, as all good women do, all her anxieties—which in her case were special—she bade him follow out his bent" (*JSS* 129-30). Margaret adds how Mrs Trelawny braved her birth pangs without her husband by her side. She reminds her father of her mother's ordeal, proclaiming, "Father! mother did not bid you stay beside her, even when you wanted to go on that journey of unknown danger to Egypt … You have told me how she left you free to go as you wished; though that she thought of danger for you, and feared it for you …" (*JSS* 170). Besides tellingly capitalising the word "Father" and using the lowercase for "mother," Stoker emphasises the fact that the paternal figure is largely removed from his wife's trying task. This reflects the historical reality that aside from medical professionals, the average gentleman showed little interest in the plight of the birthing mother. Indeed, women's reproductive lives remained elusive to the vast majority of Englishmen over the course of the long nineteenth century. It is further interesting that Stoker emphasises the perils faced by Mr Trelawny and Mrs Trelawny herself seems more concerned about her spouse's safety rather than her own. Yet it is the mother who succumbs to the dangers of childbirth alone, and is deserted in her most vulnerable hour. The manner in which the mother is represented in *The Jewel*

of Seven Stars thus speaks to the belief that the second sex should always put the needs of others before her own. Matus calls attention to this nineteenth-century worldview, one that might have been influenced by Darwinian thinking. She underlines, "Characteristically self-sacrificing, female development is geared to the good of the species; ambitious and self-interested, the male perfects himself" (34). The notion that a man's agenda comes before a woman's wishes can thus be observed throughout Stoker's Gothic tale, most especially when Margaret's mother is left to die alone in the process of bringing forth new life. Understood from a larger socio-historical perspective, Mrs Trelawny comes to represent how maternal health and well-being were largely ignored and misunderstood in the Edwardian period, and displays how Stoker does not shy away from exposing injustice towards women by revealing how the ostensibly blameless father figure of Mr Trelawny is in fact not as perfect as first meets the eye.

It is further noteworthy that the mother's death is not simply seen as a tragedy in and of itself, but also represents a sad state of affairs for the family legacy. It is significant that Mrs Trelawny expires while giving birth to a daughter, instead of providing her husband with a coveted son to carry forth the family name. Stoker thus gestures towards the idea of a double tragedy in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*; there is both the death of the mother, but also the even more calamitous end of the Trelawny lineage, a notion that is also expressed in Stoker's *The Man*, for instance.[7] Dying in the

[7] Both the issues of maternal mortality and the preference for male heirs are similarly broached in Stoker's 1905 novel *The Man*. Here, the author suggests that Stephen Norman of Normanstand, Sn.'s overwhelming desire to have a son inadvertently leads to his wife's death when she gives birth to a daughter instead. The doctor reveals that after the birth of her child, Margaret "is very weak," and cautions, "I fear anything that might upset her" (9). He even states that he has initially refrained from revealing the sex of the child, noting, "I know how it would grieve that sweet young wife and mother to

process of delivering a boy was seen as a lesser tragedy, as the mother would have fulfilled her primary function, even at the cost of her own life; to bring forth a legitimate male heir, and to allow the family name to be passed down through the patriline. Perkin underlines, "Girls learned in life that they were less important than boys," and adds, "To give birth to an heir was the major service a wife could provide for her husband, and everyone was on tenterhooks until a boy was born … In the early 1900s the birth of a girl was a disappointment, because men were in short supply and it was still a man's world" (6, 7-8). Accordingly, a dark mood is set over Stoker's tale with the tragic passing of the mother in childbirth coupled with the unfortunate lack of a male heir. In failing to provide her husband with a strapping boy and producing a female in his stead, the character of Mrs Trelawny in many ways exemplifies disparaging attitudes towards mothers at the time. Yet it is significant that Stoker aims to bring these misogynistic mindsets to light rather than simply demonise the mother for her inability to comply with the duties of an Edwardian wife.

Not only did the family name die with the passing of the mother, but her absence also led to the loss of a sense of home. Carolyn Dever underpins how maternal absence signals the breakdown of filial bonds in nineteenth-century fiction. The author notes that works of the period do not generally represent "a celebration of family unity, or even of the sanctity of the domestic sphere," but instead "the Victorian novel conventionally opens with a scene of family rupture, frequently a maternal deathbed or a tale of wanton maternal abandonment" (1, author's emphasis). This is certainly the

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feel your [Stephen, Sn.'s] disappointment" (9). Margaret ultimately dies in childbirth, and just before her passing proclaims, "She is to be our only one; let her indeed be our son!" (11). The baby daughter is accordingly named Stephen, Jr. as per her mother's last wish. *The Man* thus tackles the problematic view towards female heirs, even in the Edwardian period.

case in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, where the death of the mother foreshadows the disintegration of the family unit, and the ties that bind inevitably severed. Indeed, the loss of the mother—due to childbed death or otherwise—signals a state of social malaise in many literary texts of the period, and in Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* in particular. In short, the mention of Mrs Trelawny in the text and her sad fate ultimately indicate Stoker's willingness to acknowledge, however briefly, the taboo subject of maternal mortality, a phenomenon that the Victorians and Edwardians preferred to sweep under the carpet. The experiences of pregnancy, parturition, and post-natal care were indeed seen as necessary evils, phases of a woman's lifecycle that should remain in the shadows, hidden from view. At the same time, Stoker does at the very least touch upon the topic, and the portrayal of Mrs Trelawny in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* arguably speaks to the problematic lack of concern for a major social problem affecting women's sexual health. An examination of maternal mortality in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* thus illustrates some of the problems surrounding female sexuality in Stoker's day, and how such issues were not openly discussed in the upper echelons of Edwardian society. Stoker follows in the footsteps of many Gothic masters, whose tales of terror incorporate "concerns about motherhood and images of birth trauma" (Brock 10). The darker aspects of motherhood thus come to the fore in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, and help exemplify how Stoker often sympathises with the mother figure, a contentious and divisive persona at the closing of the long nineteenth century.

The Mother-Spirit and Doppelgänger

The helpless woman confined to the lying-in chamber was not the only notion of motherhood rife in the long nineteenth-century imagination; Stoker also conceives of Queen Tera in maternal terms. Indeed, the author suggests that his central antagonist may be envisioned at once as a mother-spirit and as a ghostly doppelgänger, stressing that there exists a sort of ethereal mother-daughter bond between Tera and Margaret. Although Tera is not a mother in the true sense of the word, she may still be envisioned as motherly if we take our cue from *Dracula*, a text that, as previously noted, abounds with maternal figures. Consider the fact that even before becoming a mother, Mina fulfils this role on a spiritual level when she comforts Arthur following Lucy's death:

> We women have something of the mother in us that makes us rise above smaller matters when the mother-spirit is invoked; I felt this big man's sorrowing head resting upon me, as though it were that of the baby that someday may lie on my bosom, and I stroked his hair as though he were my own child. (*D* 203)

This and many other passages display how Mina is ever the Marion-like matron, suggesting that certain women can be envisioned in maternal terms, even though they might not have experienced motherhood themselves. If we extend this reading to *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, Queen Tera can likewise be envisioned as a sort of "mother-spirit" to Margaret. The first and perhaps most obvious indication of a filial bond is the fact that their very names are linked; the last four letters of "Margaret" spells "Tera" backwards, recalling the manner in which an ancestral kinship is established between Laura and Carmilla/Mircalla in Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*.[8] Lisa Hopkins also

[8] In Le Fanu's 1872 novella, Laura notes that she is a matrilineal descendant of Countess Mircalla Karnstein. She claims, "I am descendant from the Karnsteins; that is, mamma was" (111). Unbeknownst to Laura, Carmilla is an anagram of Mircalla, and they are one and the same.

points out that the word "mummy" is intended to be understood as a pun for "mother," and elaborates that although *The Jewel of Seven Stars* initially seems to revolve around the Freudian father, as the story unfolds it is instead the unspoken maternal figure that takes centre stage:

> Ostensibly, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* fetishises the Name-of-the-Father. Every instance of the word "Father," when it refers to Trelawny, is capitalised, and [Laurence A.] Rickels points out that "the narrative proper begins (or ends) with the spectre or semblance of Father's death." Secretly, however, it is another name—a name never officially acknowledged—which governs the logic of events: the structuring pun on mother/mummy. The connection is never made openly in the text … Nevertheless, we are made repeatedly and insistently aware of the connection. ("Crowning the King, Mourning his Mother" 135)

Thus, for Hopkins the mother/mummy pun becomes a telling indicator that Tera can be regarded in a matronly light, but she also adds that the novel's "associations with motherhood … [are] figured at the subliminal level as monstrous" ("Crowning the King, Mourning his Mother" 135). Although I agree with Hopkins' contention that the mother figure is an important and at times monstrous force of reckoning, I would argue that Stoker often presents his female monster in a more nuanced—and at times even positive—light.

In *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, Stoker suggests that there is an elusive connection between the two strange and surreal characters of Queen Tera and Margaret. The ancient Egyptian ruler slowly takes over Margaret's personality, assuming and consuming her 'daughter' entirely. The link between Tera and Margaret is first reinforced on a physical level. Mr Trelawny accordingly reveals that his weird and wonderful daughter "is unlike her mother; but in both feature and colour she has a marvellous resemblance to the pictures of Queen Tera" (*JSS* 145). Margaret's

biological mother is somewhat dismissed here, and the emphasis is instead placed on the link between Tera and Margaret. Interestingly, Tera's own mother is likewise forgotten; the epitaph on her tomb only highlights her relationship with her father, and reads: "'Tera, Queen of the Egypts, daughter of Antef, Monarch of the North and the South.' 'Daughter of the Sun,' 'Queen of the Diadems'" (*JSS* 134). This neglect of maternal figures should not be considered accidental, however; instead these negated mothers are problematised through their very absence. Indeed, I would suggest that one might interpret this denial of maternal importance as intentionally ironic, and understand it as reflective of Stoker's efforts to draw attention to issues of gender inequality in his fiction.

Returning to the similarities between Queen Tera and Margaret, Stoker continues to reinforce the presence of a mysterious connection between the two otherworldly ladies. There is said to be a "startling likeness between Margaret and the mummy," and Miss Trelawny is often described in regal terms (*JSS* 245). She is said to be a "queenly figure … tall and slim, bending, swaying, undulating as the lily or the lotus," and is "of fine figure; dark, straight-featured … Her hair was black also, but was as fine as silk" (*JSS* 73, 39).[9] Further, an ethereal fire shines "from the dark depth of her eyes into … [one's] very soul …" (*JSS* 167). This uncanny rendering conveys the sense that Miss Trelawny is somewhat out of place in Edwardian England; she seems to hail from another era, and to possess an ancient soul. Perhaps the most

[9] Tangentially, several of Stoker's characters named Margaret possess long serpentine locks. In the author's 1892 short story "The Secret of the Growing Gold," the ghostly Margaret Delandre uses her long flowing hair as a weapon, choking her former lover and his new wife in her pythonic grip with her "tresses of golden hair, streaked with grey, which came through the broken hearth-stone" (63). This image also appears in Stoker's *The Watter's Mou'*, where Maggie MacWhirter's hair wraps around the body of her betrothed in a final embrace. Her locks are described as "floating wide and twined round the neck of Sailor Willy, who held her tight in his dead arms" (109).

compelling physical similarities, however, are revealed in the pivotal scene in which the mummified body of the Queen is unwrapped in preparation for her resurrection in the presence of several male onlookers. Malcolm reveals, "The flesh was full and round, as in a living person; and the skin was as smooth as satin" (*JSS* 241). The depictions of the two women clearly overlap, in particular with the mention of silk and satin used to describe Margaret and Tera. Stoker clearly reinforces the notion that both ladies are essentially cut from the same cloth. Another corporeal indication of Miss Trelawny's link with the ancient Egyptian Queen is her distinctive birthmark, which resembles a scar. Malcolm catches a glimpse of this mark of Cain,[10] which he describes as "a thin red jagged line, from which seemed to hang red stains like drops of blood!" (*JSS* 167). This birthmark tellingly corresponds to the location where Tera's seven-fingered hand is severed at the wrist, further underlining the otherworldly connection between the two mystifying female figures.

With the unwrapping of the Queen, Margaret feels protective vis-à-vis her spiritual mother. She accordingly acts as a protective daughter attempting to shield her mother from harm, and pleads with her father to protect the Queen's sense of decorum. She cries, "Father, you are not going to unswathe her! All you men …! And in the glare of light!" (*JSS* 236). Her father then responds that Tera would not, if she could, protest about masculine interference. He exclaims, "They didn't have women's rights or lady doctors in ancient Egypt, my dear!" (*JSS* 236). Mr Trelawny's remark reveals how Stoker here again integrates contemporary social concerns within the framework

[10] Margaret's strange birthmark has demoniacal significance, and may indeed be envisioned as a mark of Cain. The Book of Genesis reveals how "the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him" (4:15).

of his Gothic text. The snide comment about women's rights notably echoes Mina's sarcastic views on the New Woman in *Dracula*, displaying how Stoker weaves a veritable continuum of the evolving women's movement into the fabric of his tales. The author's twinning of the idea of the "lady doctor" and women's rights is also interesting in light of the fact that the first recognised woman doctor in England, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, was the sister of the earlier mentioned pioneer of women's rights, Millicent Garrett Fawcett (Crawford 11). The passage in question also displays how the now empowered Margaret is aligned with the female doctor, who takes it upon herself to shield Tera from her male onlookers. Malcolm relates, "With a womanly impulse; with a mouth that drooped with pity, with eyes that flashed with anger, and cheeks that flamed, Margaret threw over the body the beautiful robe which lay across her arm" (*JSS* 241). If we consider Margaret in the role of woman doctor, then the other men may be envisioned as midwives, which, as previously noted, were often guilty of blunders in Stoker's day. What is clear is that Margaret is here at her most powerful, and assumes a position of superiority over the band of men, who are not the most adept 'midwives' to assist in Tera's rebirth. Stoker's eagerness to incorporate issues surrounding women's health and rights is evident in his work, and reveals that he is not so quick to demonise women deemed transgressive in the Edwardian imagination as is often thought. Instead, it seems that Stoker is more interested in highlighting the failings of his male characters—albeit in a subtle fashion—in many of his texts.

In another vein, Stoker also implies that because of her uncanny physical resemblance to Tera, Margaret is similarly disrobed, at least in the men's imaginations.

Her desire to save the ancient Queen from the men's hungry eyes, then, extends to her own person; in guarding the mummy's sexuality, she in turn attempts to protect her own. Despite Margaret's assays to shield Tera, the men nevertheless indulge in the visual splendour of the Queen's unclad body. Malcolm acknowledges his feelings of shame for gazing upon the naked cadaver, observing, "I was amazed at the likeness to Margaret … This woman—I could not think of her as a mummy or a corpse—was the image of Margaret as my eyes had first lit on her. The likeness was increased by the jewelled ornament which she wore in her hair, the 'Disk and Plumes,' such as Margaret, too had worn" (*JSS* 241-42). Mr Trelawny also notes the resemblance, adding, "It looks as if you were dead, my child!" (*JSS* 242). Such comments suggest the occurrence of a veritable role reversal; Tera now seems full of life while Margaret appears deceased. This idea in many ways corresponds to the psychoanalytical view of the mother-daughter relationship, wherein "the daughter is multipositioned, in the place of the daughter and the mother simultaneously" (Wolstenholme 151). I would add that the above passages repeatedly pair the mummy and Margaret together, indicating Stoker's obsession with the mother figure. As Belford underlines, "Always stronger and more memorable than their male counterparts [are] Stoker's women characters," and adds that they "frequently have names beginning with *M* (Maggie, Mina, Mimi, Marjory, Margaret), a tribute, perhaps, to 'Mother' and sisters, Matilda and Margaret, his early caretakers" (296). The likeness between Tera and Margaret goes beyond the realm of the superficial, however. They share a powerful spiritual link as well, one that grows stronger as the tale progresses, and Stoker's use of the Gothic convention of the dark double serves to highlight this elusive connection.

The concept of Queen Tera as mother-spirit takes on another dimension if we also consider her as a doppelgänger to Margaret, providing the latter with a veritable outlet from her restricted Edwardian existence. The inclusion of the figure of the doppelgänger in the text helps elucidate Tera's larger maternal function, and depicts Stoker's tendency to align maternal and Gothic imagery, as previously seen with the peasant mother in *Dracula*. Interestingly, the doppelgänger motif in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* represents a significant departure from other contemporaneous literary doubles, which are almost invariably male; one need only think of Frankenstein and his monster; Dracula and Van Helsing; or Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, to name a few. In such works, the doppelgänger is more than a dark double who portends demise, but holds a larger symbolic significance. Catherine Spooner elucidates, "In folklore the *doppelgänger* is traditionally regarded as a harbinger of death, but in nineteenth and twentieth-century literature is usually interpreted as performing a more complex psychological function" (129). Valdine Clemens adds that we can envision the doppelgänger as an "alter-ego or alternative personality" in the context of Gothic fiction (100). Indeed, the presence of the dark double indicates that the repressed self must create another identity in which unbridled passions and desires may be freely explored. In *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, Stoker's use of the doppelgänger motif is especially evident where a mystical connection between Tera and Margaret is emphasised. Consider the scene in which Mr Trelawny describes the ethereal nature of their union. He surmises, "I know well that the spirit of her mother is within her. If in addition there be the spirit of that great and wondrous Queen, then she would be no less dear to me, but doubly dear!" (*JSS* 221). It is precisely this spirit which leads

Margaret to perform certain acts she would otherwise never dream of committing. Sergeant Daw, Doctor Winchester, and Malcolm himself all become suspicious of her, and eventually concur that she attacks her father on several occasions in an altered state of mind, ostensibly possessing no recollection whatsoever of her assaults upon him. Yet in light of the fact that the doppelgänger typically enacts repressed wishes and desires of their human counterpart, it is plausible that on some subconscious level Margaret deeply resents her father for having abandoned her in childhood. Seen in this light, her attacks on him can hardly be interpreted as arbitrary, and may instead be seen as wilful acts carried out by proxy. Thus, Queen Tera functions as a volatile mother who is able to bring Margaret's deepest and most secret wishes to fruition.

Several other passages suggest that Queen Tera can be thought of as a veritable doppelgänger to the young heroine. As Margaret changes more and more, Malcolm deduces, "If the Egyptian belief was true for Egyptians, then the 'Ka' of the dead Queen and her 'Khu' could animate what she might choose. In such case Margaret would not be an individual at all, but simply a phase of Queen Tera herself; an astral body obedient to her will!" (*JSS* 213).[11] Margaret may in this sense be seen as a modern-day manifestation of Tera, as she merges with her dark double, becoming two entities inside one body. Malcolm indeed acknowledges that his beloved holds a "dual existence," and apprehensively wonders "what might happen when the two existences became one?" (*JSS* 223). The hero interprets the changes in Margaret as a sort of temporary possession, but his underlining and unspoken fear is that she will move from a state of passive Edwardian maidenhood to one of destructive female empowerment

[11] In the novel, Stoker identifies the "Ka" as the "Double," and the "Khu" as the "spiritual intelligence" (*JSS* 181).

by merging with her doppelgänger. As the narrative progresses, Malcolm laments the distinct changes occurring within the object of his affection, as she becomes less like her old self and more like her maternal double, Queen Tera. In particular, he notes a shift in her temperament as the date of Tera's resurrection draws near:

> Margaret was changing! At times during the past few days I had hardly known her as the same girl … Now she was generally distraite, and at times in a sort of negative condition as though her mind—her very being—was not present … I never knew whether the personality present was my Margaret—the old Margaret whom I had loved at the first glance—or the other new Margaret, whom I hardly understood, and whose intellectual aloofness made an impalpable barrier between us … It was almost as if she was speaking parrot-like or at dictation of one who could read words or acts, but not thoughts … And so hour by hour we drifted apart. (*JSS* 211)

Margaret here transforms into a woman who is no longer recognisable to her beloved Malcolm. The latter repeatedly voices his desire to restore the object of his affection to her former docile self, and expresses sheer delight when she momentarily reverts to the "old Margaret, without alloy of any other" (*JSS* 224). The hero indeed longs for a more sweet and submissive version of Miss Trelawny, one that is less domineering and assertive. What is also implied, however, is that Malcolm feels threatened by the powerful and volatile female he sees emerging in Margaret's stead, displaying how her dark double is helping her blossom into a creature that is not easily controlled by men.

Consider the episode in which Malcolm describes Margaret entering into a passionate fury when her pet cat Silvio attacks the Queen's mummified cat. He relates how Margaret's transformation is sudden and frightening for the men who bear witness to it:

> The incident showed Margaret in a new phase, and one which gave my heart a pang. She had been standing quite still at one side of the cave

> leaning on a sarcophagus, in one of those fits of abstraction which had of late come upon her; but on hearing the sound, and seeing Silvio's violent onslaught, she seemed to fall into a positive fury of passion. Her eyes blazed, and her mouth took a hard, cruel tension which was new to me. Instinctively she stepped towards Silvio as if to interfere in the attack. But I too had stepped forward; and as she caught my eye a strange spasm came upon her, and she stopped. Its intensity made me hold my breath; and I put up my hand to clear my eyes. When I had done this, she had on the instant recovered her calm, and there was a look of brief wonder on her face. With all her old grace and sweetness she swept over and lifted Silvio, just as she had done on former occasions, and held him in her arms, petting him and treating him as though he were a little child who had erred. (*JSS* 208)

Margaret's body seems to be temporarily seized by a corporeal invader: the spirit of her symbolic mother and doppelgänger, Queen Tera. Malcolm notes that she becomes a new person, one that displays bestial characteristics, recalling the manner in which the dissident characters of Lucy and Mina are similarly portrayed in *Dracula*. One may, however, also deduce from Malcolm's description that he fears the changes in Margaret precisely because she is transforming into a domineering and potentially dangerous woman, one that bears a greater resemblance to Tera with each passing day.

Yet at the same time that he sees Margaret becoming stronger, Malcolm also fears that the ancient Egyptian Queen, though an empowering force vis-à-vis Margaret, also possesses the power to harm her. He gathers, "The remaining possibility of relations between Margaret and the mummied Queen was, that in some occult way the Sorceress had power to change places with the other … But Margaret was herself at stake!" (*JSS* 214). This premonition is a tragic foreshadowing of the end of the tale, where Tera apparently kills her 'daughter'—along with almost all of the central characters—once she achieves her goal of resurrection. Malcolm, the sole survivor of the ordeal, reports that the resurrection of the mummy goes horribly awry, and blinded

by darkness and smoke, mistakenly carries the body of Tera, not Margaret, to safety (*JSS* 249). The hero then discovers that Margaret has perished, ostensibly having met a horrific end. He relates how "Margaret had put her hands before her face, but the glassy stare of her eyes through the fingers was more terrible than an open glare" (*JSS* 250). Apparently, Tera has orchestrated Margaret's gruesome murder, explaining why the character is frequently read as "a force of destruction not love" (Smith 87). Yet I would like to advance the possibility that Margaret is not truly dead here; rather, she has simply moved into another phase of being, and has instead merged with her maternal double to experience freedom from the hegemonic society that has long held her captive. Although the mother figure is undoubtedly represented as monstrous in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, one may alternatively envision her as a liberating force vis-à-vis Margaret, without whose help she would not be able to challenge her oppressive male counterparts. In this sense, Tera can not only be envisioned as a monstrous foe, but may alternatively be seen as a powerful doppelgänger who provides Margaret with the ability to defy the patriarchy, and ultimately reject hegemonic norms.

The Jewel of Seven Stars may in this sense be read as a "story [that] builds ominously towards Margaret's amalgamation with her potent and ancient double" (Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon* 25). I would emphasise that Stoker represents this amalgamation as liberating, rather than oppressive, for the Edwardian lady-turned-empowered Queen. Comparatively, in *Dracula*, Stoker suggests that the transgressive Lucy lives on through the New Woman Mina. If we take our cue from the closing of *Dracula*, Margaret can likewise be seen as a character who is not truly gone at the end of the novel, but instead represents yet another of Stoker's undead ladies who lives on

in another form. The maternal character of Tera can thus be examined as a sympathetic being, displaying the author's inclination to defy the dictates of Victorian and Edwardian orthodoxy, and depict transgressive dames in a more flattering light than is often the case. In short, the images of the mother-spirit and doppelgänger serve to emphasise the bond between Tera and Margaret, and display how the mummy Queen encourages her symbolic daughter to allow her repressed dissident self to flourish.

The Deadly Womb

Stoker continues to employ Gothic conventions in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* by envisioning Tera as a deadly womb, again displaying the ways in which he pairs Gothic motifs with maternal imagery. Although the relationship between Tera and Margaret can be conceived of as an empowering mother-daughter union, Tera is depicted as significantly more threatening to her male counterparts. Indeed, she is often presented as an engulfing womb, again displaying the manner in which Stoker integrates maternal imagery into his tale. The author establishes Tera as a threat to the ruling patriarchy not because she is innately evil, but instead because uncommendable men have either threatened her power, or else get in the way of her grand machinations. Mr Corbeck relates some of his findings on Tera to Malcolm, noting that she was an educated woman who followed in the footsteps of her father, King Antef. The latter "had her taught statecraft, and had even made her learned in the lore of the priests themselves" (*JSS* 136). Corbeck emphasises that "the Princess had been brought up amongst scribes, and was herself no mean artist … It was not without cause that she was inscribed on the Stele as 'Protector of the Arts'" (*JSS* 136-37). Not only does Tera

threaten the patriarchy by virtue of being a highly learned dame, but she is also said to have adopted a masculine identity. Hieroglyphics of her life recount this:

> Prominence was given to the fact that she, though a Queen, claimed all the privileges of kingship and masculinity. In one place she was pictured in man's dress, and wearing the White and Red Crowns. In the following picture she was in female dress, but still wearing the Crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt, while the discarded male raiment lay at her feet. (*JSS* 137)

The mention of Tera's cross-dressing here displays how the regal lady effectively rejects gender categories for women.[12] The idea that male garments are strategically positioned "at her feet" further signifies that she is able to slip into a masculine identity at will, and also reveals how she can be seen as a vessel that manifests both male and female identities.

Because of the power she wields, her male rivals naturally feel threatened. It is revealed that the priests of ancient Egypt loathed her, and were infuriated that her skills in magic surpassed their own. Mr Corbeck describes how "the hatred of the priests was, she knew, stored up for her, and that they would after her death try to suppress her name" (*JSS* 138). Corbeck notes that Tera's protective measures "were against the disturbances of human hands; against the jealousy and hatred of the priests, who, had they known of her real aims, would have tried to baffle them" (*JSS* 176). The Queen possesses the foresight and intelligence to recognise her male contemporaries as enemies, and using her sorcery succeeds in triumphing over them by discovering the key to immortality. When she enters a deep sleep in the hopes of achieving

[12] Cross-dressing signals a challenging of gender roles in several nineteenth and early twentieth-century texts. In Thomas Hardy's 1895 novel *Jude the Obscure*, for instance, Sue dresses in Jude's clothing in one episode, and is said to look as "warm as a new bun and boyish as a Ganymedes" (188). Because she assumes a male identity, Sue, though initially appearing weak, later holds a position of sexual superiority over Jude.

resurrection, she can be thought of as a being that is in a state of gestation, linking her yet again to the mother figure. Thus, in her dealings with the ancient Egyptian priests, Queen Tera refuses to abide by male hegemonic structures, and Stoker portrays her in a largely sympathetic light, suggesting that she is quite justified in her disdain towards men.

Aside from challenging her male contemporaries, Queen Tera also proves a fatal foe to men who attempt to meddle in her affairs thousands of years after she has been laid to rest. Mr Corbeck recounts that when he first descends into her tomb, he discovers the body of a grave robber, one of many who has tried in vain to steal the Queen's treasures. Those who dare to disturb Tera's sleep—most especially the men who hack off her bejewelled hand—pay for their offenses with their lives. Nicholas van Huyn of Hoorn describes in his journal how the grave robbers desecrate the Queen's body, establishing Tera as a pitiful, rather than ruthless monster (*JSS* 123-24). Many of Van Huyn's accounts emphasise how Tera responds to—rather than initiates—violence, and describes how the dead bodies of those who have wronged her are scattered throughout the tomb. He relates, "It was easy to see that in the years that had elapsed there had been other visitors to the tomb; and my heart sank within me when I thought that some of them might by chance have come across the secret place … I lit my torches … the dried-up body of a man in Arab dress lay close under the opening, as though he had been stricken down" (*JSS* 150). Even more suggestive is Van Huyn's account of the grave robber who is discovered strangled with seven finger marks upon his neck. He indicates, "I found on his throat the red marks where fingers had pressed … There were seven; and all parallel, except the thumb mark, as though

made with one hand. This thrilled me as I thought of the mummy hand with the seven fingers" (*JSS* 124). These occurrences along with several other suspicious deaths throughout *The Jewel of Seven Stars* suggest that the mysterious mummy is indeed the perpetrator. Malcolm recounts how the ancient Queen's male victims have steadily accumulated over the years:

> In the history of the mummy, from the time of Van Huyn's breaking into the tomb, the record of deaths that we knew of, presumably effected by her will and agency, was a startling one. The Arab who had stolen the hand from the mummy; and the one who had taken it from his body. The Arab chief who had tried to steal the Jewel from Van Huyn, and whose throat bore the marks of seven fingers. The two men found dead on the first night of Trelawny's taking away the sarcophagus; and the three on the return to the tomb. The Arab who had opened the secret serdab. Nine dead men, one of them slain manifestly by the Queen's own hand! And beyond this again the several savage attacks on Mr Trelawny in his own room, in which, aided by her Familiar, she had tried to open the safe and to extract the Talisman jewel. His device of fastening the key to his wrist by a steel bangle, though successful in the end, had wellnigh cost him his life. If then the Queen, intent on her resurrection under her own conditions had, so to speak, waded to it through blood, what might she not do were her purpose thwarted? What terrible step might she not take to effect her wishes? (*JSS* 216)

This long list of fatalities along with those mentioned by Van Huyn suggest that men are effectively swallowed up in Tera's womb-like abode, and Malcolm is correct in his presentiment that she will continue to 'consume' those who dare hamper with her plans.

The Cornish cavern by the sea is another deadly womb-like setting worthy of examination. It is there that the male characters of *The Jewel of Seven Stars* are inexplicably and irrevocably drawn to the ancient Queen, and it is also there that almost all of them meet their demise. Before the cavern massacre occurs, however, it is significant that Tera is conceived of as a forbidden object of desire. The "little band of

men" share a sense of unease as they contemplate the well-preserved mummy. Malcolm in particular is overcome with feelings of guilt, yet cannot look away:

> We all stood awed at the beauty of the figure which, save for the face cloth, now lay completely nude before us. Mr Trelawny bent over, and with hands that trembled slightly, raised this linen cloth which was of the same fineness as the robe. As he stood back and the whole glorious beauty of the Queen was revealed, I felt a rush of shame sweep over me. It was not right that we should be there, gazing with irreverent eyes on such unclad beauty: it was indecent; it was almost sacrilegious! And yet the white wonder of that beautiful form was something to dream of. (*JSS* 240-41)

Feelings of shame are coupled with sexual yearnings here; Malcolm and the other respectable Edwardian gentlemen know full well that their attraction to Tera is wrong, yet the fact that she is a forbidden object of desire is precisely what makes her appealing. In this way, Tera shares an important parallel with the mother figure as she is understood in psychoanalysis, where she "becomes that which is longed for yet cannot be appropriated, a representative of both home and not home … the site of the uncanny" (Sprengnether 9). This push-pull compulsion towards the mummy/mother is frequently expressed in the novel, where Tera is depicted as a compelling lady who is dangerous, but whose magnetic force is too powerful to resist. Viewed in this light, the ancient Egyptian Queen can arguably be aligned with the figure of the mother. The interplay between dread and desire in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* thus captures a contemporary Edwardian understanding of the mother as a being who is feared, yet at the same time revered.

Stoker further creates a parallel between the image of the womb and tomb-like setting of the cavern. The resurrection cavern, like Tera's own tomb, is dark, hypnotic, and seemingly alive. When Malcolm exits the place at the end of the tale, he seems to

be departing, or rather escaping, from a monstrous womb. He relates, "I came to the stairway, and hurried up the steps with what haste I could make, hampered as I was with my dear burden … as I went the weight that I bore seemed to grow less as I ascended from the cavern" (*JSS* 249). Stoker here juxtaposes the images of the womb, tomb, and mother, just as he does in *Dracula*. Both Lucy and Tera are featured in burial chamber settings, and their symbolic children are threatened once they enter this mystical space.[13] This reinforces the Gothic motif of the tomb as a sort of engulfing womb. Bronfen elucidates how "even as the woman as desired sexual object undoes the work of death by promising wholeness, her body is also seen as the site of a wound, its sight a source of death for man. Next to the image of the Virgin Mary without a tomb … [there is] Eve as the womb …" (69). Thus, the womb/tomb trope that Stoker utilises may be rooted in biblical imagery, which is in line with many other religious concepts he refers to in his writings. In the same vein, Tera can be envisioned as a Marion-like figure who is able to give new life (as she does with Margaret), and also take life (as she does with interfering men). The matron, in this sense, is ambiguously positioned; she can be understood as both saint and sinner, darling and demon. Dorothy Dinnerstein underlines, "The … mother's apparent omnipotence … her ambivalent role as ultimate source of good and evil, is a central source of human malaise: Our species' uneasy, unstable stance toward nature, and its uneasy, unstable sexual arrangements, are inseparable aspects of this malaise" (100). This looming sense of anxiety towards the

[13] Comparatively, Stoker's *The Man* also presents the maternal tomb as a terrifying milieu for youngsters, wherein the heroine Stephen experiences a traumatic episode inside her mother's burial chamber. The knowledge that her mother's dead body lies buried there leads her to experience hysterical symptoms. Stephen relates, "I never thought, never for a moment, that my poor dear mother was buried in the crypt … I couldn't bear it. She was only a girl herself, only just twice my age—lying there in that terrible dark place with all the thick dust and the spiders' webs … How shall I ever bear to think of her lying there, and that I shall never see her dear face? Never! Never!" (26).

maternal figure is thus arguably manifested throughout Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, especially with the womb/tomb imagery that permeates throughout the text.

Returning to the image of the womb-like cavern, Mr Trelawny reveals that it is chosen as the site of the experiment precisely because it resembles Tera's original resting place in Egypt. He notes, "In a hundred different ways it fulfils the conditions which I am led to believe are primary with regard to success. Here, we are, and shall be, as isolated as Queen Tera herself would have been in her rocky tomb in the Valley of the Sorcerer, and still in a rocky cavern" (*JSS* 206). Mr Trelawny suggests on the one hand that the cavern is the ideal place to resurrect an ancient Egyptian mummy, and on another depicts it as a fertile breeding ground that will bring forth new life, not unlike the maternal womb. Although every precaution is taken beforehand to ensure everyone's safety, Malcolm painfully relates at the close of the tale that the experiment ends with the deaths of almost all members of the "little band of men."[14] These ill-fated individuals include Abel Trelawny, Eugene Corbeck, Doctor Winchester, and even his beloved Margaret:

> Sick at heart, and with a terror which has no name, I went down into the cavern … I … went to look for my companions. I found them all where they had stood. They had sunk down on the floor, and were gazing upward with fixed eyes of unspeakable terror … I did what I could for my companions; but there was nothing that could avail. There, in that lonely house, far away from aid of man, naught could avail. It was merciful that I was spared the pain of hoping. (*JSS* 250)

[14] Queen Tera's team of resuscitators, including Malcolm Ross, Abel Trelawny, Eugene Corbeck, and Dr Winchester gesture towards *Dracula*'s own "little band of men" consisting of Jonathan Harker, Quincey Morris, Arthur Holmwood, Dr John Seward, and Dr Abraham Van Helsing. They are so described at the close of *Dracula*, where Jonathan notes, in relation to his son's name, "His bundle of names links all our little band of men together. But we call him Quincey" (*D* 326).

This ending resembles a dark and twisted version of *Sleeping Beauty*, where a regal lady awakens after many years, only to kill off her princely resuscitators.[15] If we compare this ending to the closing of *Dracula*, the transgressive female actually survives at the end of *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. This consists in a veritable departure from Stoker's famous vampire tale where the dissident females of Lucy and the weird sisters are killed off, yet arguably live on through Mina. In attempting to historicise Stoker, one may observe a marked progression in his treatment of women; he allots more power and agency to dissident female characters as the women's movement advanced. It is also rather interesting that the author does not consistently represent the male heroes as triumphant across the spectrum of his works, especially if we take our cue from the ending of *Dracula*, and see Stoker as being intentionally ironic when morally questionable men emerge victorious. Bearing this in mind, Tera can be understood as more than a figure who is "demonized as an object from another world who is a force of destruction not love" (Smith 87). Her triumph at the end of the novel indeed reflects how masculine power was beginning to wane towards the close of the

[15] The original ending differs greatly from the 1912 heavily edited version of *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. As previously mentioned, the main characters all survive, and Queen Tera, taking her cue from Count Dracula, dissolves into a pile of dust. Also similar to *Dracula*, the tale ends with a marriage, on a happily ever after note:

> When Mr Trelawny and Mr Corbeck recovered sufficiently, which they did quickly, though Doctor Winchester took longer to come round, we went over it afresh. But all we could find was a sort of ridge of impalpable dust, which gave out a strange dead odour. On the couch lay the jewel of the disk and plumes which the Queen had worn in her hair, and the Star Jewel which had words to command the Gods. Other than this we never got clue to what had happened. There was just one thing which confirmed our idea of the physical annihilation of the mummy. In the sarcophagus in the hall, where we had placed the mummy of the cat, was a small patch of similar dust. In the autumn Margaret and I were married … Once, when I said with a sigh that I was sorry she could not have waked into a new life in a new world, my wife, putting both her hands in mine and looking into my eyes with that far-away eloquent dreamy look which sometimes comes into her own, said lovingly: "Do not grieve for her! Who knows, but she may have found the joy she sought? Love and patience are all that make for happiness in this world; or in the world of the past or of the future; of the living or the dead. She dreamed her dream; and that is all that any of us can ask!" (Stoker 255-56)

long nineteenth century. Indeed, Stoker suggests that male characters who initially appear heroic in reality are simply meddling in the affairs of a powerful female, and ultimately pay for their offenses with their lives. In this sense, Queen Tera can be thought of as a woman who presents a threat to masculine hegemony, and the men who cross her path seldom leave unscathed.

Similar to *Dracula*'s weird sisters who "reverse the maternal role by eating rather than nourishing babies" (Belford 14), the ancient Egyptian mummy Queen turns on her 'children,' setting up a ploy to ensnare them in a death-trap. Once she achieves victory over death, the regal lady swiftly eliminates all those who witness her resurrection. In this way, the mummy/mother may be understood as an antagonistic force, especially vis-à-vis her male counterparts. Although the characters in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* in many ways "work towards the pursuit of the absent mother," this pursuit is swiftly terminated when the all-powerful matriarch destroys her kith and kin (Smith 81). The murder of the characters at the end of the tale as well as the rebirth of the Queen effectively reverse the earlier examined episode of Mrs Trelawny's childbed death, and provide a provocative tableau in which the men now become the victims of a botched delivery, with the womb pictured as a source of danger to them. Thus, from start to finish, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* is filled with maternal imagery, implicitly represented but continually emphasised nonetheless.

Tera's refusal to acquiesce when faced with acts of male aggression interestingly aligns her with those ladies who similarly fought against male oppression in Stoker's day. Matus holds that the converging issues of female emancipation and motherhood were bubbling at a time when the women's movement in England was

gaining momentum. She indicates, "It is not coincidental that debates … about motherhood peak at what is also a moment of increased feminist activity, growing criticism of the sexual double standard, and assertion of woman's needs for education and economic independence" (159). These contemporary debates are in turn played out in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, with Queen Tera portrayed as an empowered and educated woman who can simultaneously be envisioned in maternal terms. The regal lady in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* indeed stands for the multiple faces of femininity, and illustrates the author's view that a woman can be both liberated and at the same time matronly. Yet in typical Stoker fashion, the mother is also depicted in a Gothic light, represented as a dead (and sometimes deadly) force of reckoning. In short, Tera can be thought of as a monstrous womb to men who attempt to interfere with her plans, yet she can also be envisioned as a more positive maternal force vis-à-vis Margaret. *The Jewel of Seven Stars* suggests that when women adopt fulfilling roles, they are promptly labelled as threats to masculine supremacy, and Tera's ultimate triumph over this hegemonic system displays how Stoker is more sympathetic towards dissident women than is often thought.

Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* explores the figure of the mother as an elusive persona who is at once vulnerable, threatening, and empowering in his late tale of terror. Following Matus' understanding of maternity in *Unstable Bodies*, which views mothers as volatile and problematised in many nineteenth-century texts, this chapter illustrates how the mother is depicted in a rather sympathetic light in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, perhaps in part reflective of the author's admiration for his own mother as well as countless other matrons who fought for women's rights in turn-of-the-

century England. In *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, the mother figure is first examined through the issue of maternal mortality. Mrs Trelawny's childbed death shows how the plight of birthing mothers in Stoker's day was often ignored, and further demonstrates how the loss of the family matron often led to the breakdown of the family unit. Next, Stoker presents the figure of Queen Tera as a "mother-spirit" and doppelgänger, and shows how she empowers her symbolic daughter Margaret, leading her to challenge the patriarchy in a variety of ways. The author finally envisions Tera as a sort of deadly womb, one who swallows up men attempting to usurp her power. The dead(ly) mother gestures towards those women who refused to abide by gender conventions that proselytised the need for Marion-like matrons. The ending of the novel, which I argue is key to the understanding of Stoker's view of women, also points towards a feminine triumph over masculine powers, displaying a marked progression since *Dracula*, where defiant females live on symbolically but are killed off in the flesh. One may indeed observe the evolution of Stoker's feminist thought, where unorthodox female characters become more sympathetic and celebrated with time, instead of simply being denounced and vilified. The mother figure in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* ultimately represents an important façade of transgressive femininity, one of the many examples of social dissension that Stoker applauds in his horror novels. Another dissident dame that can be added to the author's list of feminine types is the figure of the ethnic Other, who makes a notable appearance in *The Lady of the Shroud*.

Chapter 3

"I am not as other women are": The Foreign Female in *The Lady of the Shroud*

> Think, my dear one, I am not as other women are, as
> some day you shall clearly understand.
> —Teuta Vissarion, *The Lady of the Shroud*

Just as dead(ly) mothers figure prominently in Stoker's vision of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century womanhood, the foreign lady is an equally important archetype of femininity that deserves consideration. The world of turn-of-the-century England naturally feared the presence of outsiders, at a time when mass immigration was occurring, and a plethora of different cultures began to collide. Those not belonging to Anglo-Saxon stock were often labelled monstrous parasites, and were frequently ostracised by English nationals. Yet Stoker, who was himself an outsider in England, is not as critical of the racial Other[1] as is often held. Indeed, he is arguably more progressive in his treatment of certain foreign peoples than many of his contemporaries. In his 1909 Gothic tale *The Lady of the Shroud*, he presents his vision of foreign femininity with the figure of Teuta Vissarion, a mysterious Balkan woman who is portrayed as an undead creature of the night.[2] Unlike *Dracula*, a story of

[1] I intentionally capitalise the word "Other" in this chapter when referring to the Gothic/exotic/alien outsider in long nineteenth-century thought. Ruth Bienstock Anolik and Douglas L. Howard observe, "The tendency to personalize the unknown Other has been noted by a number of critics … [Some] critics note the racializing of this tendency, the projection of racial anxieties onto the figure of the Gothic Other" (2).

[2] *The Lady of the Shroud* is the story of young adventurer Rupert Sent Leger who is sent to live in the mysterious and enchanting Land of the Blue Mountains as a condition to access his inheritance. Once settled in his new home, the Castle of Vissarion, he begins to receive nightly visitations from a mysterious shrouded lady in distress. At the same time, Janet MacKelpie, his old and eccentric aunt, is haunted by visions of a ghostly veiled woman who corresponds to the lady Rupert encounters. At first believing she is a vampire, he later discovers that she is in fact human. It is revealed that this woman—named Teuta Vissarion—is the daughter of the Voivode Peter Vissarion, leader of the Blue Mountaineers. Teuta explains to Rupert that she must feign death in order to evade enemy capture by the Turkish Sultan. Eventually, both Peter and Teuta are captured by the Sultan in an act of war against the Blue Mountaineers. Rupert saves them in a dramatic aircraft rescue and destroys the Turkish threat in the process. In recompense, Rupert is made king of the Blue Mountaineers, marries Teuta, and has a young son who promises to be a great leader like his father.

"reverse colonisation" where the Other is irredeemably threatening,[3] *The Lady of the Shroud* is more progressive in its outlook, and suggests the possibility of racial harmony between nations. Stoker's increasingly liberal attitude towards foreigners in his late Gothic fiction also interestingly parallels his more enlightened view of women over time. In *The Lady of the Shroud*, the author first displays how vampirism can be understood as a metaphor for racial otherness, and the fact that Teuta is not as threatening as she initially appears displays an attempt on the part of the author to demystify prejudicial views of foreign peoples. Next, Stoker presents his Balkan heroine as an empowered sexual creature who eschews proper codes of conduct for women, and whose libidinal appetite in many ways surpasses that of men. Stoker finally addresses the idea of racial degeneration and intermarriage. Although it must be remembered that the author often displays unabashed racism in his writings and was undoubtedly a product of his time, his surprisingly positive depiction of intermarriage in *The Lady of the Shroud* suggests he is more broad-minded than many of his confrères. Turning to Judith Halberstam's understanding of race, gender, and monstrosity in *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*, this chapter explores the more progressive representation of foreign femininity in Stoker's lesser-known vampire tale. A close examination of his representations of the foreign female in *The Lady of the Shroud* through the lens of vampirism, unbridled sexuality, as well as degeneration and intermarriage help reveal how Stoker is more open-minded than often thought, and shows how the author's writings effectively evolved over time.

[3] Stephen Arata notes, "*Dracula* enacts the period's most important and pervasive narrative of decline, a narrative of reverse colonization" (621). The author underscores that Count Dracula's invasion of England effectively reverses the coloniser/colonised equation.

In *Skin Shows*, Halberstam argues that monsters are "meaning machines" that can illustrate "gender, race, nationality, class and sexuality in one body" (21-22). In Halberstam's view, monstrosity is characterised by a "balancing act" between the oppositional forces of "inside/outside, female/male, body/mind, native/foreign, [and] proletariat/aristocrat" (*Skin Shows* 1). Halberstam notes that Gothic writers of the nineteenth century "mixed and matched a wide variety of signifiers of difference to fabricate the deviant body" (*Skin Shows* 3). The ethnic Other in particular was transformed into an abject figure of horror to be shunned and marginalised. Halberstam draws attention to this process of othering, and posits that "race in nineteenth century Gothic was one of many clashing surfaces of monstrosity" (*Skin Shows* 5). The author elaborates how Gothic literature often includes the trope of the monstrous racial Other:

> Gothic becomes one place to look for a fiction of the foreign, a narrative of who and what is not-English and not-native. The racism that becomes a mark of nineteenth century Gothic arises out of the attempt within horror fiction to give form to what terrifies the national community. Gothic monsters are defined both as other than the imagined community and as the being that cannot be imagined as community.
> (*Skin Shows* 15)

Thus, the monster becomes an entity upon which the nation's fears and anxieties are projected, a subjective label bestowed onto those not belonging to a socially constructed community.[4] To Halberstam's contention I would add that the demonisation of the monstrous Other can often be understood as intentionally ironic, and can serve instead to underpin the even more extreme monstrosity of the imagined

[4] Following Halberstam's understanding of race as a subjective social construct that creates artificial systems of classification, I use the terms "racial Other," "ethnic Other," "foreigner," "outsider," and "alien" to situate my analysis within a long nineteenth-century context only.

community itself, an idea that Stoker explores in many of his texts, and in *The Lady of the Shroud* in particular.

Halberstam further develops a gendered approach to the issue of monstrosity, observing that male monsters differ significantly from female monsters in popular imagination. She reveals, "The power of the male monster is that it does precisely become human and so it makes humanity intrinsic to a particular kind of monstrosity and vice versa. The female monster cannot be human because it is always only an object, a thing, 'unfinished'" (*Skin Shows* 51). The female monster, according to the author, is seen as an outcast even among monsters and "is present on the margins" (*Skin Shows* 52). Halberstam thus reveals the female monster to be a creature largely objectified, a being that is always in some way lacking. Yet in *The Lady of the Shroud*, Stoker proves capable of moving beyond contemporary long nineteenth-century visions of feminine monstrosity, and instead emphasises the humanity of his vampiric foreign lady. Drawing on and at the same time departing from Halberstam's observations on monstrosity, race, and gender, one may turn to an examination of the exotic woman in *The Lady of the Shroud*, but not before acknowledging how the women's movement and ladies in Stoker's own social circle were helping to shape his vision of femininity around the time he produced his novel.

It is indeed useful to explore the feminist-related events occurring around the setting and publication of Stoker's lesser-known vampire tale. To begin, the story is set between 1907 and 1909, and published in 1909, thus firmly situating it within the latter part of the Edwardian period. At the time, the women's movement in England was gaining more and more supporters, with several milestones achieved over this two-year

span. Carolyn Nelson relates that in 1907, for instance, the Women's Freedom League (WFL) was formed by several breakaway members of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), and in that same year, the women's movement sought to reach a wider audience with the maiden publication of *Votes for Women*, a newspaper co-edited by husband and wife team Frederick and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, displaying how men were becoming implicated in the suffragette cause (xxiv). 1908 saw the women's movement take a violent turn with the election of anti-suffragist Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith. As a result of his regressive policies, Mary Leigh and Edith New became known as the first window-breaking suffragettes when they attacked his home at 10 Downing Street (Nelson xxiv). Also in 1908, the author points out that the Women Writers' Suffrage League (WWSL) and the Actresses' Franchise League (AFL) were born, but in order to avoid conflict, these organisations chose not to endorse the stratagems employed by their suffragette consoeurs (xxiv). In 1909, the year of *The Lady of the Shroud*'s publication, Nelson observes that the suffragettes varied their tactics, from arson to hunger strikes. She recounts how the first hunger strike was carried out by artist Marion Wallace Dunlop on 5 July 1909, and starting in September of that year, incarcerated suffragettes were routinely force-fed (xxiv). The women's movement in England was thus well underway in the years leading up to the release of Stoker's lesser-known vampire novel, and the author was undoubtedly influenced by the violent discontent he saw erupting around him.

Although the suffragette cause certainly contributed to Stoker's vision of femininity in *The Lady of the Shroud*, strong women in his own social circle were also colouring his understanding of the second sex around the time he produced his tale,

and none so much as the famed actress Dame Geneviève Ward, Countess de Guerbel (1837-1922), to whom Stoker dedicated his novel, referring to her as "my dear old friend" (*LS* 18).[5] It seems the feelings of admiration were mutual, since, in a 1908 letter, Ward referred to Stoker as her "Dear Brother Bram" (Farson 204), and was one of a handful of close friends present at his funeral (Cain 158). An American actress and opera singer based in England and married to a Russian Count, Ward in many ways embodies the idea of exotic femininity associated with Teuta in *The Lady of the Shroud*. In *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, Stoker allots an entire chapter to her, and describes his first encounter with her on 20 November 1873 in flattering terms. He writes, "The lady … impressed me at once; she was like a triton amongst minnows" (2: 167). Stoker's description of Ward also closely resembles his physical portrayals of Teuta. He remarks in his memoirs that Ward "was very handsome; of a rich dark beauty, with clear cut classical features, black hair, and great eyes that now and again flashed fire. I sat in admiration of her powers" (*Personal Reminiscences* 2: 167). Later in his work, he once again calls attention to her captivating gaze. He observes, "Miss Ward has one great stage gift which is not given to many: her eyes can blaze" (*Personal Reminiscences* 2: 175). Not only is Stoker complementary of Ward's outward appearance, but he also applauds her bravery for daring to correct Irving's acting, a gesture that many of his contemporaries would have considered unfathomable. In *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, he reports that because Irving held Ward in such high esteem "he was open to correction with regard to

[5] The full dedication of *The Lady of the Shroud* reads: "TO MY DEAR OLD FRIEND THE COMTESSE DE GUERBEL (GENEVIÈVE WARD)" (Stoker 18).

emphasis of a word" while rehearsing for *Richard III* (2: 174). Irving's acquiescence to a woman's correction (or anyone's for that matter) was indicative of the fact that she was "a particularly *strong* actress" in Stoker's opinion (2: 175, author's emphasis). The episode is important in light of Stoker's understanding of transgressive womanhood, since he here applauds an act of feminine defiance vis-à-vis masculine authority, suggesting that his fictional female transgressors are likewise not as demoniacal as one might first be led to believe.

For all her admirable attributes, Ward was not untouched by scandal, and like Ellen Terry could hardly be described as an orthodox Victorian/Edwardian dame. In 1855, Ward married the Count de Guerbel of Nicolaeiff at the Consulate in Nice, only to have him declare the marriage void shortly thereafter. He had fallen in love with another woman, and tried to argue that his marriage to Ward had not been legitimised by the Russian Orthodox Church. Because her family was able to persuade the Czar into forcing the reluctant Count into a religious ceremony, Ward was spared public humiliation and scandal (Hughes, *The Lady of the Shroud* 18). In his description of the ceremony in *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, Stoker recounts the solemn mood cast over the wedding party:

> The altar was set for marriage and before it stood the injured lady, her father, Colonel Ward, and her mother. Her father was armed, for the occasion was to them one of grim import. De Gerbel [*sic*] yielded to the mandate of his Czar, and the marriage—with all needful safeguards this time—was duly effected. Then the injured Countess bowed to him and moved away with her own kin. At the church door husband and wife parted, never to meet again. (2: 171)

Not only does this description echo the grim wedding ceremony in *The Lady of the Shroud*, but it also displays how Ward's marriage, although legitimate, was, in truth, a

sham. Yet as Catherine Wynne points out, going through with the ceremony actually served to empower Ward who remained married in name only, and who was otherwise a strong independent female. Although not as vocal in her espousal of women's rights as Ellen Terry and other contemporaries, one may certainly label Ward a proto-feminist. Wynne concurs, "Through her actions, Ward foils De Guerbel's illicit designs, repudiates any designation of fallenness and simultaneously achieves a proto-feminist victory through the act of marriage" (253). Ward was thus able to command the respect of her peers through an act of defiance towards male authority, and Stoker had nothing but praise and admiration for her. On the other hand, the author had great disdain for Count De Guerbel who may well have served as one of the models for Count Dracula (Cain 158), and who he described as a fellow "not of chivalrous nature" (*Personal Reminiscences* 2: 170). What this suggests is that Stoker was more liberal in his attitude towards unconventional dames than many of his critics contend, and was actually frequently critical of his fellow men. In short, both the women's movement and individuals in Stoker's own social circle, such as Geneviève Ward, were helping to fashion his vision of womanhood around the time he produced *The Lady of the Shroud*. Bearing this historical framework in mind, one may now turn to an examination of exotic femininity in the text, but not before a brief look at how foreign men are portrayed therein.

The Foreign Male

The Lady of the Shroud presents several different non-English male characters, including Irish, Scottish, Balkan, and Turkish nationals who together encompass

Stoker's vision of masculine foreignness. Through his depictions of various nations, the author displays how he is tolerant towards certain nationalities while being extremely prejudicial towards others. Yet the English do not escape critique by the author in the novel, and are not consistently raised on a pedestal above foreign peoples as one might expect. To begin, Stoker addresses his central character Rupert's own Anglo/Irish/Scottish background, displaying how he is a veritable medley of different nationalities. Interestingly, Rupert departs from many of Stoker's other male heroes in *Dracula* and *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, whose blood is purely English. Stoker spends a considerable amount of time tracing his lineage in *The Lady of the Shroud*. At the start of the tale, the Englishman Ernest Roger Halbard Melton attempts to paint his first cousin once removed Rupert in a negative light.[6] He reveals that while his own side of the family married wisely, Rupert's side failed to make astute marital choices. Specifically, Ernest notes that Rupert's mother Patience (née Melton) made a poor marital choice by wedding an Irishman:

> Patience, who was born in 1858, married an Irishman of the name of Sellenger—which was the usual way of pronouncing the name of St. Leger, or, as they spelled it, Sent Leger—restored by later generations to the still older form. He was a reckless, dare-devil sort of fellow, then a Captain in the Lancers, a man not without the quality of bravery—he won the Victoria Cross at the Battle of Amoaful in the Ashantee Campaign. But I fear he lacked the seriousness and steadfast strenuous purpose which my father always says marks the character of our own family. (*LS* 25-26)

Not only does Ernest describe Rupert's Irish father as a brutish type, but he also ranks his military feats lower than those achieved on the English side of the family. Ernest

[6] Ernest feels even more disdain for his cousin Rupert after discovering that his grand-uncle Roger Melton has left Rupert one thousand pounds sterling and a castle (with certain conditions) in his will, and has left Ernest comparably little (*LS* 46-48).

adds that the Sent Legers had one child only—Rupert—and attempts to label him as more Irish than English. He recounts, "Her own child was a son, who seemed to take his character rather from his father's family than from my own. He was a wastrel and a rolling stone, always in scrapes at school, and always wanting to do ridiculous things" (*LS* 26). Given that Stoker was Irish born, and that Ernest is both an unreliable narrator as well as a dishonourable character, the prejudicial views of the Irish may be understood as ironic here. Indeed, the propensity for military achievements on the Irish side of the family seem to aid—rather than abate—Rupert in his political triumphs later in the tale. Thus, Ernest's othering of the Irish here can only reflect the English desire to create social distinctions between England and other nations, and Halberstam acknowledges this widespread phenomenon over the course of the nineteenth century:

> As the English empire stretched over oceans and continents, the need to define an essential English character became more and more pressing. Non-nationals, like Jews, for example, but also like the Irish or Gypsies, came to be increasingly identified by their alien natures and the concept of "foreign" became ever more closely associated with a kind of parasitical monstrosity, a non-reproductive sexuality, and an anti-English character. (*Skin Shows* 16)

Thus, Halberstam explains that efforts were made on the part of the English to separate themselves from their non-English counterparts. Although this othering can be observed in many contemporary Victorian and Edwardian works and certainly in several of Stoker's own texts, it should not be forgotten that he often exposes prejudicial attitudes towards foreign peoples as well. Because Stoker himself was one such alien as an Irish expatriate living in England, he can often be seen as sympathetic to the plight of foreigners. Indeed, several (but not all) non-English nationals are positively portrayed in *The Lady of the Shroud*.

Aside from his attacks on the Irish, Ernest also takes aim at the Scottish branch of Rupert's family, suggesting that the latter's paternal uncle ostensibly made "an improvident marriage with a Scotch girl" (*LS* 26).[7] He claims, "They had nothing to live on … for he had next to nothing himself, and she was "bare"—which is, I understand, the indelicate Scottish way of expressing lack of fortune" (*LS* 26-27). Although Ernest grudgingly admits that, like the Irish, the Scots proved themselves worthy in battle, he quickly adds, "Fighting alone does not make a family, I think" (*LS* 27). Ernest also insults Rupert's Aunt Janet, remarking, "Mrs St Leger had a sister [Aunt Janet]; fortunately there were only those two children in the family, or else they would have all had to be supported by the money of my family" (*LS* 27). He further dismisses Aunt Janet as "a sort of governess" to Rupert in his youth, and tries to downplay her connection to the family (*LS* 26). Even though Ernest is correct in his assertion that no blood ties bind Rupert to Janet, she is still akin to a surrogate mother who cared for Rupert after he was orphaned at the age of twelve (*LS* 28). Thus, Ernest once more attempts to smear Rupert's good name by portraying his Scottish family as lowbrow folk who act as monetary leeches towards their English relatives. Like the Irish before them, the Scots only redeeming feature, in Ernest's view, is that they are soldierly, or else come from military families. Yet Stoker again emphasises the unreliability of the narrator, and generally portrays the Scots in a positive light throughout the rest of the novel. Indeed, besides Ernest's remarks, Stoker often highlights the redeeming qualities of the Scottish people, yet curiously mentions

[7] Rupert has no actual blood ties to Scotland, however. Instead, he is linked to the country through his association with his adoptive Aunt Janet, who is Scottish. Although he refers to Janet MacKelpie as his aunt, she is not technically an aunt; it is revealed that she is Patience's "brother-in-law's sister-in-law" (*LS* 27).

Rupert's Irish roots only once throughout *The Lady of the Shroud*. Glover addresses this intentional omission on Stoker's part, theorising that his frequent use of fictional references to Scotland actually function as substitutes for the politically unstable Ireland:

> In a number of his stories the Scottish countryside or Scottish people appear to stand in for their counterparts across the Irish Sea. In the wake of the disillusionment following the collapse of Gladstonian Home Rule, Scotland functioned as a sublimated Ireland, a place of folk legends, resourceful subjects, and immense natural beauty. (13)

To Glover's contention I would add that if Rupert is read as more Irish than English, then his triumph at the end of the tale perhaps suggests that Stoker believed the dream of Home Rule—never realised during his lifetime—was not as impossible a fantasy as many held.[8] Indeed, *The Lady of the Shroud* contains many political undertones, and can be understood as belonging to the genre of the national tale.[9] Julia Wright accordingly notes, "In Teuta, Stoker collapses a variety of images of the nation and national sovereignty" (204). To Wright's reading I would add that the tensions created between Rupert's English, Irish, and Scottish identities are even more indicative of the author's positioning as a "philosophical Home-Ruler," a term Stoker used to describe himself during the Gladstonian years in *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (2: 31).

It is further significant that Stoker identifies Rupert as an Englishman as well, but this label is only bestowed onto him once he has left England for the Land of the

[8] Stoker supported Gladstone's Home Rule bills "in the 1880s and early 1890s" (Senf, *Science and Social Science in Bram Stoker's Fiction* 35). Had he lived another eight years, it is plausible that he would have supported the passage of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920.

[9] Ina Ferris describes the genre of the national tale as "a fiction that locates itself in a contentious zone of discourse in order to articulate the grievances of a small people" (50).

Blue Mountains. The Balkan people classify him simply as English and/or British, without mentioning his links to Ireland and Scotland. The Vladika, for instance, calls him a "gallant Englishman who has come amongst us to share our sorrows and ambitions" (*LS* 126). Further, the Voivode, who makes Rupert king at the end of the novel, proclaims how the latter's "great nation" will serve as the guiding light of the Balkan kingdom:

> He comes of a great nation, wherein the principle of freedom is a vital principle that quickens all things. That nation has more than once shown to us its friendliness; and doubtless the very fact that an Englishman would become our King, and could carry into our Government the spirit and customs which have made his own country great, would do much to restore the old friendship, and even to create a new one, which would in times of trouble bring British fleets to our waters, and British bayonets to support our own handjars. (*LS* 303)

It appears as though the Balkan people understand "English" and "British" as coterminous, which is problematic for Rupert, since his Irish and Scottish connections are effectively erased. Jimmie E. Cain, Jr. sees a link between the author and the hero, underlining, "Much as was the case with Stoker himself, Rupert is an assimilated, appropriated English subject" (159). Despite his appropriation, the reader is well aware that Rupert has emerged from a diverse background, and follows in his mother and uncle's footsteps by wedding a foreigner. Through the character of Rupert, Stoker thus breaks from the rather inflexible Edwardian boundaries between self and Other, English national and outsider, and exemplifies Halberstam's understanding of race as a fluid social construct.

Aside from Rupert's eclectic identity, Stoker also addresses the idea of foreign masculinity with depictions of the noble Blue Mountaineers and the villainous Turks. The Balkan men of the Land of the Blue Mountains are described as loyal and

courageous folk who "value honour, and freedom, and liberty, and bravery" (*LS* 231). The warrior-like ways of the Balkan men, emphasised by the symbolic "flashing of the handjars" further echo the fighting spirit of Rupert's Irish and Scottish relatives (*LS* 298). This Orthodox Christian nation sharply contrasts with another group of foreign nationals portrayed in *The Lady of the Shroud*: the Muslim Turks. Whereas the Blue Mountaineers are presented as commendable soldiers prepared at every moment to give their lives for their country, their Turkish enemies are labelled "marauders" and "ruffians," and revert to cowardly tactics of war, such as attacking women and the elderly (*LS* 220). The Archbishop of the Eastern Church accordingly notes that the "base traditions and history of the Moslems" make them veritable threats to the Christian nation of the Land of the Blue Mountains.

Stoker's divergent treatment of these two groups of foreign males in the text—Balkan and Turkish—illustrates that he does not rank all nationalities equally; instead he reveals balkanism at its best and orientalism at its worst. Maria Todorova explains that, contrary to popular belief, balkanism is not a form of orientalism, and stresses that the two should be considered separate and distinct ways of imagining the Eastern Other. She underlines, "Balkanism evolved to a great extent independently from orientalism and, in certain aspects, against or despite it" (20). The author further elaborates that the Balkans have long enjoyed a more positive perception in Western imagination than their Eastern, and specifically Muslim, counterparts:

> The Balkans' predominantly Christian character … fed for a long time the crusading potential of Christianity against Islam. Despite many attempts to depict its (Orthodox) Christianity as simply a subspecies of oriental despotism and thus as inherently non-European or non-Western, still the boundary between Islam and Christianity in general continued to be perceived as the principal one. (Todorova 20)

Understanding the difference between balkanism and orientalism helps uncover the racial rhetoric of *The Lady of the Shroud*, where Stoker imagines the Christian Other more favourably than he does the 'heretical' Muslim. The text indeed draws clear distinctions between various peoples, and religion, more than anything, is the great divider. Because the Blue Mountaineers share religious common ground with the British, they are ultimately able to come together as Christian nations, forming strong political alliances for years to come. The same cannot be said of the Muslim Turks, however, who symbolise demoniacal otherness, and where a meeting of minds—and nations—is virtually impossible in Stoker's worldview. Thus, in *The Lady of the Shroud*, the author is at times progressive in his depiction of masculine foreignness, but at other moments reverts to prejudicial views more typical of his day. With this brief portrait of the non-English male in mind, one may proceed with an in-depth look at Stoker's treatment of feminine foreignness in his forgotten vampire tale.

The Vampire as Foreign Female

Stoker's *The Lady of the Shroud* first links the exotic female with the author's most famous monstrous figure—the vampire. As with the titular undead dame in Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*,[10] the pseudo-vampire in *The Lady of the Shroud* is depicted as a fearful but powerful creature of darkness that clashes with English values

[10] Patrick R. O'Malley observes, "French, Austrian, Slavic, Jewish, African, and Indian 'clues' … all swirl around the question of Carmilla's identity," displaying how the female vampire is featured as an elusive ethnic Other in Le Fanu's work (139).

and valour.[11] In the tale, Rupert initially believes that the mysterious woman who visits him on a nightly basis is a "child of the night."[12] The hero is not the first to suspect that the titular lady may be a vampire, however. The opening chapter recounts Captain Mirolani's and other witnesses' strange encounter with a ghostly woman on the open seas, later identified as the "Lady of the Shroud." The Captain reports sighting "*a tiny figure of a woman drifting on some strange current in a small boat, on the prow of which rested a faint light (to me it looked like a corpse candle!) … I made out that the boat … was none other than a Coffin and that the woman standing up in it was clothed in a shroud*" (*LS* 21, author's emphasis). Although this description, and the presence of the coffin in particular suggest that the mysterious woman is indeed a vampire, the nature of her identity is not disclosed until later in the tale. Only when Rupert encounters her does he determine that his midnight visitor in fact belongs to the legions of the undead. He surmises that his "fascinating visitor … appeared to be the Vampire … the Lady of the Shroud … began to assume a new force" (*LS* 120). After much contemplation, he concludes, "I came to accept tentatively the Vampire theory—accept it, at least, so far as to examine it as judicially as was given me to do … The more I

[11] The Lady of the Shroud, later identified as Teuta Vissarion, is a suspected vampire until it is revealed in Book VI that she is in fact human. Her vampiric persona is merely an act to help protect her and her homeland from Turkish threat. As Palealogue discloses, Teuta is initially thought to be dead, but in reality is induced into a cataleptic trance. Officials decide that she should continue to feign death, and perform her "grim comedy" to avoid being forced into a marriage with the Sultan, and to prevent war between the Blue Mountaineers and the Turks. Palealogue notes, "She herself proposed that the belief in her death should be allowed to prevail until the return of her father, when all could be effectively made clear … The Vampire legend was spread as a protection against partial discovery by any mischance, and other weird beliefs were set afoot and fostered" (*LS* 215).

[12] In *Dracula*, the Count, upon hearing the howling of wolves, famously proclaims, "Listen to them—the children of the night. What music they make!" (24). Subsequently, in popular culture, "children of the night" became synonymous with vampires.

thought, the more obstinate became the conviction" (*LS* 121). Rupert then proceeds to list the various ways in which the mysterious lady fits a vampiric persona:

> Briefly, the evidence in favour of accord between the facts of the case and the Vampire theory were: Her coming was at night—the time the Vampire is according to the theory, free to move at will. She wore her shroud—a necessity of coming fresh from grave or tomb; for there is nothing occult about clothing which is not subject to astral or other influences. She had to be helped into my room—in strict accordance with what one sceptical critic of occultism has called 'the Vampire etiquette.' She made violent haste in getting away at cock-crow. She seemed preternaturally cold; her sleep was almost abnormal in intensity, and yet the sound of the cock-crowing came through it. These things showed her to be subject to *some* laws, though not in exact accord with those which govern human beings. (*LS* 121-22, author's emphasis)

The strange and beautiful damsel ostensibly fits a vampiric profile and Rupert subsequently discovers his beloved asleep in a glass coffin in the crypt of the Church of St. Sava, further reinforcing his vampire theory. He recalls his unholy discovery during daylight hours, noting, "Within, pillowed on soft cushions, and covered with a mantle woven of white natural fleece sprigged with tiny sprays of pine wrought in gold, lay the body of a woman—none other than my beautiful visitor. She was marble white, and her long black eyelashes lay on her white cheeks as though she slept" (*LS* 138). Later, the mysterious woman reveals that she is aware of the rumours circulating that she is a vampire, and initially does not confirm or deny these allegations. Instead, she remains intentionally cryptic on the subject of her identity:

> But do you know what men say? Some of them, that I am dead and buried; others, that I am not only dead and buried, but that I am one of those unhappy beings that may not die the common death of man. Who live on a fearful life-in-death, whereby they are harmful to all. Those unhappy Un-dead whom men call Vampires—who live on the blood of the living, and bring eternal damnation as well as death with the poison of their dreadful kisses! (*LS* 167)

Stoker thus extensively develops his vampire mythos in *The Lady of the Shroud*, and consequently "the reader, familiar with Gothic conventions, is likely to assume that Teuta is a vampire" (Senf, *Science and Social Science in Bram Stoker's Fiction* 109). It is noteworthy that in both *The Lady of the Shroud* and "Dracula's Guest,"[13] vampire women are featured as the primary characters/antagonists.[14] This once again exemplifies how Stoker's fiction may be viewed as more and more progressive over time; while *Dracula*'s weird sisters and Lucy are relegated to secondary roles, in *The Lady of the Shroud*, produced a little over a decade later, the female vampire takes centre stage.

Once Rupert concludes that his mysterious visitor is an undead being, he proceeds to emphasise the exotic nature of Teuta's monstrosity, specifically linking vampirism with racial otherness. The vampire in *The Lady of the Shroud* is classified as another race altogether, and Rupert views her as a creature that is separate and distinct from the rest of humankind. He remarks, "I had to realize now that the Lady of the Shroud might indeed be a Vampire—one of that horrid race that survives death and carries on a life-in-death existence eternally and only for evil" (*LS* 139). Stoker's

[13] Stoker's short story "Dracula's Guest" likewise features a female vampire, Countess Dolingen of Gratz, as the primary antagonist. Although published in 1914, two years after Stoker's death, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the tale was "written contemporaneously with the narrative [*Dracula*]" (Klinger 503). Scholars remain divided on the issue of whether the story is the deleted first chapter of *Dracula*.

[14] In "Dracula's Guest," an unnamed narrator describes Countess Dolingen of Gratz as a figure of sexual temptation, once again displaying how the ethnic Other can be read as a lascivious being in Stoker's works. In the tale, the narrator relates, "I saw, as my eyes turned into the darkness of the tomb, a beautiful woman with rounded cheeks and red lips, seemingly sleeping on a bier" (Stoker 12). The narrator reports sensing a "strange, dominating feeling" that he is not alone, before witnessing the stake being struck by lightning and penetrating the Countess' grave. He reveals, "The dead woman rose for a moment of agony, while she was lapped in a flame, and her bitter scream of pain was drowned in the thundercrash" (Stoker 12). Many critics have pointed to the Countess' lack of agency in the story. Auerbach, for instance, notes that the Countess' presence in the tale is perplexing and that she simply represents a "sleeping, then shrieking specter," a form of feminine evil that must be stamped out by the patriarchy (*Our Vampires, Ourselves* 66).

foreign female stands as the antithesis of the prude and proper English lady, and it is worth noting that even *Dracula*'s Lucy, an upper-class Englishwoman, transforms into a dark and threatening Other once she becomes vampirised.[15] In *The Lady of the Shroud* too, the author links the ideas of vampirism and race, effectively othering his vampire in a way that echoes the manner in which foreigners were similarly marginalised by the English in Stoker's day. An exotic being that resists classification, Teuta indeed exudes a "strong feeling of deformity"[16] that so many non-English nationals were said to radiate. Yet since Rupert himself is not a pure Englishman and is an outsider in a distant land, his fear of the racial/vampire Other seems rather ironic, and displays how Stoker problematises the definition of "foreigner" in *The Lady of the Shroud*. By contrast, in some of his earlier works such as *Dracula*, the line between English and foreigner is more clearly defined. Thus, *The Lady of the Shroud* illustrates Stoker's tendency to view race as a fluid social construct, revealing a more progressive side of the author that emerges in his later writings.

Like Rupert, who is a hodge-podge of different nationalities, the vampire Teuta is confused and conflated with several supernatural figures. After becoming enchanted with his mysterious visitor, Rupert attempts to determine the order of monsters to

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[15] In *Dracula*, Lucy becomes physically darker once she joins the ranks of the undead, as discussed in Chapter 1.

[16] This phrase is a nod to Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, which addresses late Victorian fears of foreignness. The phrase in question comes from the scene in which Enfield tells Utterson that he witnessed Hyde violently trample a child, but when Utterson asks him to describe the man, he only manages to provide an ambiguous portrait of him:

> He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary-looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory; for I declare I can see him this moment. (Stevenson 35-36)

Hyde threatens to become integrated within society, since his deformity cannot be clearly identified.

which she belongs. In listing the creatures "still walking the earth, though claimed by the world of the dead," he determines that she must be one of the well-known creatures of the night (*LS* 119). The hero displays his knowledge of several supernatural beings:

> Amongst them are the Vampire, or the Wehr-Wolf. To this class also might belong in a measure the Doppelgänger—one of whose dual existences commonly belongs to the actual world around it. So, too, the denizens of the world of Astralism … Doppelgänger, Astral creations, and all such-like, did not comply with the conditions of my night experience. The Wehr-Wolf is but a variant of the Vampire, and so needed not to be classed or examined at all. Then it was that, thus focussed, the Lady of the Shroud (for so I came to hold her in my mind) began to assume a new force. (*LS* 119-20)

It is interesting that the vampire is grouped alongside the doppelgänger here, which harkens back to the manner in which the feminine monstrous is envisioned in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. Yet even more significantly, Rupert claims, "The Wehr-Wolf is but a variant of the Vampire," a clearly erroneous assumption; although the two nocturnal creatures do share certain affinities, they are still vastly distinct. The hero's ignorance in this regard—the inability to distinguish between various nocturnal creatures and properly identify the vampire—recalls the confusion and conflation of various groups of ethnic outsiders by the English towards the end of the long nineteenth century. The 'vampire' Teuta, who is identified as a sort of monstrous medley, thus reflects how different nationalities were often denied their individuality and seen as pestilent non-English Others in Stoker's day, a reality that the author does not blindly adhere to, but instead wishes to expose in his text.

Further along these lines, it is significant that Rupert considers staking his beloved vampire, putting her soul to eternal rest. He reveals in so many words that, like *Dracula*'s Arthur Holmwood before him, he would gladly dispatch the woman he

loves in order to 'save' her from damnation.[17] He confesses, "If she be indeed a Vampire, the task may be hard and long … what can be more sweet than to restore the lost or seemingly lost soul of the woman you love!" (*LS* 123). He further elaborates on how he plans to release his beloved. He professes, "Dead she may be, or Un-dead—a Vampire with one foot in Hell and one on earth. But I love her; and come what may, here or hereafter, she is mine … If she is indeed to be won from the nethermost Hell, then be mine the task!" (*LS* 163-64). The elusive task to which Rupert alludes is undoubtedly to wield the "mercy-bearing stake."[18] If we consider the female vampire as representative of the Gothic and ethnic Other, then her suggested annihilation may gesture towards the English desire to literally and figuratively stake their claim over other nations and submit foreigners to colonial rule. This is precisely what happens when Rupert is made king of the Land of the Blue Mountains at the close of the novel, an ending that may well reflect Stoker's critique—rather than approval—of British colonialism.

The foreign female vampire in *The Lady of the Shroud* may thus be said to stand for the marginalised non-English Other, which, as Howard L. Malchow underlines, is a common association in late nineteenth-century Gothic fiction:

> Anxieties about self-identity and the preservation of individuality provoked a more intense awareness of the "unnatural" in human relationships … The vampire myth offered an uneasy middle-class readership both sexuality and "bad blood" as subversions to be feared and blamed for cultural failure. It is no mere coincidence that there should have been a minor boom in sensational stories of supernatural

[17] In *Dracula*, the aggressive sexuality that Lucy exudes leads to her second and ultimate death by staking. Like Shakespeare's Desdemona to whom she alludes, Miss Westenra is similarly dispatched at the hands of her would-be husband.

[18] Dr Seward refers to the weapon with which Arthur dispatches Lucy as the "mercy-bearing stake" (*D* 192).

> and psychological vampirism in the troubled last third of the century, when the issues of "unfair" economic competition, immigration of "the unfit," and race degeneration featured prominently in both the sensational and the quality press. (127)

The fanged revenant was thus seen as the quintessential symbol for the "bad blood" polluting England. Halberstam further adds that the monster's resurgence in popularity towards the fin de siècle is not coincidental. She explains, "The reemergence of Gothic monstrosity at the end of the century coincides suggestively with the Gothic interdisciplinary interest in the racial body …" (*Skin Shows* 79). Certainly, the Gothic monster taps into cultural anxieties about foreigners and the undead are particularly adept at embodying this fear. Yet I would add that in the novel, the female vampire/racial Other does not invade England like Count Dracula, and is not as vilified as in some of her earlier incarnations, suggesting that Stoker's monstrous women—and by extension certain nationalities—are more sympathetically portrayed over time. In short, *The Lady of the Shroud* successfully equates vampirism with racial otherness through the character of the vampiric Teuta Vissarion. By confusing and conflating her with different supernatural creatures, Stoker draws attention to the manner in which non-English nationals were erroneously perceived. Further, the contemplation of the vampire's staking may symbolise the British desire for colonial expansion, a phenomenon that Stoker clearly grappled with as an Irishman living in England. The female vampire in the text helps elucidate the manner in which foreigners were treated by the English, and reveals Stoker to be an author capable of critiquing—rather than blindly supporting—prejudicial views about other nations.

Fallenness and the Foreign Female

An examination of the foreigner as fallen woman in *The Lady of the Shroud* further displays Stoker's tendency to challenge contemporary codes of conduct for women with his transgressive female characters. In the tale, the character of Teuta often resembles the post-lapsarian Eve, and her midnight rendezvous with Rupert coupled with her connection to the Sultan described in the first few sections of the novel help depict her in a libidinal light. The link between foreign ethnicity and feminine fallenness is established early in the text, when Rupert first meets the captivating Teuta. The hero describes her in alluring terms on the occasion of their first encounter:

> There, outside on the balcony, in the now brilliant moonlight, stood a woman, wrapped in white grave-clothes saturated with water, which dripped on the marble floor, making a pool which trickled slowly down the wet steps. Attitude and dress and circumstance all conveyed the idea that, though she moved and spoke, she was not quick, but dead. She was young and very beautiful, but pale, like the grey pallor of death. Through the still white of her face, which made her look as cold as the wet marble she stood on, her dark eyes seemed to gleam with a strange but enticing lustre. (*LS* 107)

In a Gothic reversal of the famous *Romeo and Juliet* balcony scene, Stoker portrays the female as the wooer and the male as the object of affection. The lady is clearly the aggressor here, demanding that a gentleman bid her entry into his room in the middle of the night. This behaviour clearly went against conventional rules of conduct for women in long nineteenth-century England, and gestures towards the practice of calling. Considered a "highly ritualized system of entering and leaving domestic space," calling was a common courtship practice in Stoker's day, part of which

involved a man requesting an audience with his beloved (Logan 31). Traditionally such meetings were chaperoned, in order to ensure that no indecencies would occur. In *The Lady of the Shroud*, however, the nightly encounter is unsupervised, and Teuta engages in the calling herself by requesting that Rupert usher her into his room, thereby mocking established social conventions.[19] Jennifer Phegley indicates that it would be unthinkable for any respectable Victorian dame to call upon a man.[20] She underscores, "Though gentlemen could visit ladies under the conditions set forth … 'it need hardly be said that ladies never call upon gentlemen' unless married and calling on an old family friend" (46). Because the mysterious lady hails from a distant land, she is oblivious to the rules of proper decorum for women, yet Stoker implies that on some level her ignorance makes her freer than her English counterparts.

During this same meeting, Rupert remarks, "She looked at me imploringly … and in eloquent gestures implored me to admit her" (*LS* 108). The repetitive use of the word "imploring" here displays how the lady is portrayed as a beseeching figure, one who perhaps seeks carnal comfort. This is evidenced by the fact that when Rupert inquires about what he can do to help her, the woman's reply is both elusive and sexually suggestive. She responds to his query "in a voice of thrilling, almost piercing sweetness, which seemed somehow to go straight to my heart, and affected me strangely: 'Give me warmth'" (*LS* 109). The lady's tone in particular displays how she has much in common with some of Stoker's other female vampires; her voice echoes

[19] A similar forbidden nightly encounter occurs in Stoker's *Lady Athlyne*, where sweethearts Joy Ogilvie and Lord Athlyne spend the night at the same inn. Even though they do not realise they are under the same roof, and do not engage in any indecent behaviour, they have nevertheless committed a grave offense in Colonel Ogilvie's eyes. He accuses them of being "alone and almost naked in each other's arms," and believes that Lord Athlyne has compromised his daughter's honour (192).

[20] This rule of conduct certainly carried over into the Edwardian period as well, when *The Lady of the Shroud* was published.

the seductive intonations used by *Dracula*'s weird sisters to entice Jonathan, as well as the intoxicating inflections employed by Lucy to woo Arthur. Also noteworthy about the passage in question is Teuta's order to provide "warmth," which may be interpreted in more ways than one. Although the mystifying maiden certainly desires shelter from the cold, she may simultaneously be sending a veiled libidinal message. Kim Stevenson underlines how the Victorians possessed different ways of communicating certain forbidden topics by engaging in coded conversations:

> The Victorians, in both written and oral expression, employed a coded language for describing sexual acts and sexually explicit detail. Such discourse was often asexual, cryptic and nebulous, avoiding graphic terms and etymology. However, it is evident that whosoever the recipient audience, such linguistics were clearly understood and decoded at the time. The use of double-entendres, contradictions and metaphors formed the basis of this ambiguous sexual language. (233)

Thus, the Victorians possessed ways of engaging in improprietous topics without being sexually explicit, and I would add that this tendency certainly carried over into the Edwardian period as well, when *The Lady of the Shroud* was published. Given the number of suggestive metaphors and double-entendres present within Stoker's work, Teuta's seemingly innocent exchanges with Rupert may be read as coded conversations where she repeatedly conveys her sexual availability to the young man. Because a female—rather than a male—is boldly leading such explicit discussions, the exotic lady can be understood as a fallen woman, one who displays unchecked passion. Yet, as the tale progresses, Teuta's ostensible state of fallenness often seems to empower rather than undermine her.

Coded conversations are not the only way in which Teuta's lasciviousness is celebrated, however; water also stands as a metaphor for her fluid sexuality in *The*

Lady of the Shroud. Rupert tellingly observes that his midnight visitor is "saturated with water" and notes that her wet shroud leaves "a trail of moisture on the green carpet" (*LS* 107, 109). Although exposure to wet and cold temperatures are clearly the cause of her sodden appearance, Stoker hints that the lady's wetness may also be due to pheromonal discharge, thereby stressing her innate animality. It is further significant that the woman's shroud is more reminiscent of an undergarment than a proper dress. Rupert notices the translucent quality of her attire, and relates how "her ice-cold wet shroud … was hardly normal for a woman," and adds, "In that mystic light her white shroud seemed diaphanous, and she appeared like a spirit of power" (*LS* 122, 178-79). The idea that Teuta resembles a "spirit of power" in a state of undress suggests that her raw sexuality serves to strengthen—rather than simply mark her—as a vulnerable libidinal creature as one might expect.

Not only does her physical appearance and behaviour mark her as a seductive siren, but Teuta's intoxicating effect upon Rupert likewise reinforces her image as a sexually illicit figure. Once she enters into the threshold of the bedchamber, she continues to behave like a libidinal aggressor towards the passive hero. Although Senf notes that Teuta "never threatens him [Rupert] or any other human being" (*The Critical Response to Bram Stoker* 158), she can nevertheless be seen as possessing the ability to hold sexual power and control over her male counterpart. For instance, she disregards unspoken codes of conduct for women by undressing in the same room as a man, albeit from behind a folding screen. The hero's imagination runs wild as he reports, "There was a slight rustle, and then a hollow 'flop' as the wet garment fell on the floor; more rustling and rubbing, and a minute later she emerged wrapped from head to foot in the

long Jaeger garment" (*LS* 110). Rupert's auditory sense is heightened to compensate for the visual and tactile faculties he is barred from using. Since only a thin barrier separates the hero from the body of a naked woman, the titular lady of Stoker's tale may be seen as a tantalising maiden, one who has truly mastered the art of seduction.

Shortly thereafter, when the Lady of the Shroud asks to change out of her wet clothing and take her ease in his room, Rupert finds this "embarrassing suggestion" too much to bear (*LS* 112). He reveals, "I felt impossibly awkward; and stuttered and stumbled before I spoke: 'But surely—the convenances! Your being here alone at night! Mrs Grundy—convention …'" (*LS* 113). The hero conjures up the popular figure of Mrs Grundy to appeal to the lady's sense of decorum.[21] His pleas are ignored, however, as Teuta asks rhetorically, "What are convenances or conventions to me! … And besides, it is for me to *make* conventions to yield my personal freedom of action to them" (*LS* 113, author's emphasis). Rupert's appeal to Mrs Grundy clearly has no bearing upon Teuta's behaviour, and she scoffs at the notion of abiding by an outsider's conventionalities, even implying that her country's own rules of conduct are superior to those of England. In doing so, she exemplifies Halberstam's contention that monsters "embody threats to dominant forms of culture" (*Skin Shows* 22). Thus, Stoker here again empowers his foreign female in the text, revealing how she is stronger and often more resilient than her Anglo-Irish counterpart. Teuta's rejection of English etiquette is indicative of the manner in which other ethnicities were thought to upset

[21] Hughes notes that Mrs Grundy is "a character never seen but frequently referred to in Thomas Morton's play *Speed the Plough* (1798), [and] is an embodiment of conventional propriety and prudery in British culture, an inflexible and absolute standard against which one's actions will be judged" (*LS* 113). In Stoker's text, Teuta makes it abundantly clear that she neither knows nor cares for Mrs Grundy or British conventions.

behavioural codes through their various barbaric practices. Yet like many of the prejudicial passages in *The Lady of the Shroud*, Stoker might have intended the Mrs Grundy episode to be ironic and perhaps even comedic, displaying the manner in which his Gothic novels evolve over time.

The Lady of the Shroud has such a profound impact upon Rupert that her influence extends far beyond their brief encounters. She also infiltrates the hero's thoughts and dreams and becomes the object of his sexual fantasies, further displaying the manner in which she can be understood from a libidinal perspective. Rupert admits his attraction to his lovely guest in his journal, noting, "I suppose that I have fallen in love with her. If so, it is too late for me to fight against it. I can only wait with what patience I can till I see her again. But to that end I can do nothing. I know absolutely nothing about her—not even her name" (*LS* 123). Indeed, Teuta's name is not revealed in the first part of the novel, and Catherine Wynne accordingly posits that "in many of Stoker's fictions, women are often protractedly unnamed, an indication of their shifting, ambiguous, and possibly dangerous identities" (261). It is indeed Teuta's dangerous allure which attracts Rupert more than anything, and he admits to feeling the "pain of loneliness," adding that he has "grown to love [her] so madly" (*LS* 135). So powerful is her force field that Rupert again confesses, "I was by now mad for her, and was content to be so mad" (*LS* 176). He acknowledges the looming state of lunacy enveloping him and slowly becomes a hysterical lovesick man, recalling the male hysterics portrayed in *Dracula*. His obsession with the mysterious woman even transforms him into a stalker of sorts. He confesses in his journal that he tracks his lady down to the crypt of St. Sava, like a hunter pursuing his prey (*LS* 138). One might

argue that Rupert is enthralled by Teuta precisely because of her otherness, and like Byron's Don Juan, sees his relationship with foreign women as an adventurous exotic experience.[22] Milly Williamson accordingly underlines that such notions were fundamental to the thinking of the period. She specifies that "the link between sexual lasciviousness, savagery, animalism and race … was widespread in the nineteenth century" (20). Teuta's fallenness is thus intrinsically linked to her foreign identity, a depiction that reflects contemporary Edwardian views about non-English Others. However, it is worth remembering that although Stoker often embraces contemporary ideologies about women and race, he proves capable of departing from such views as well.

Although Halberstam notes that Stoker's Count Dracula represents "a composite of otherness that manifests as the horror essential to dark, foreign, and perverse bodies" (*Skin Shows* 90), I would add that in both *Dracula* and *The Lady of the Shroud*, foreign sexuality may also be envisioned as a liberating force, suggesting that Stoker may be regarded as more progressive than is often believed. In short, *The Lady of the Shroud* reveals the foreign female to be a fallen yet empowered woman in Stoker's lesser-known vampire tale. Teuta's non-conformist behaviour is evident from her first meeting with Rupert, as well as on several other occasions when she initiates scandalous midnight rendezvous. By shocking Rupert with her aggressive libidinal demeanour, she illustrates how the ostensibly loose sexual morals of the foreign female depart significantly from the more restrictive codes of conduct that Rupert is

[22] In Lord Byron's 1819 narrative poem *Don Juan*, for instance, Don Juan has a passionate love affair with Haidée and several other foreign ladies. In the poem, she is described as a dark beauty: "Her hair, I said, was auburn: but her eyes / Were black as death, their lashes the same hue" (117.1-2). Byron's vision of Haidée certainly resonates with Stoker's portrait of Teuta.

accustomed to at home. Fallenness may thus be understood as an important distinguishing attribute of the foreign woman, who represents one of the many façades of transgressive sexuality in Stoker's day. Yet the author's fallen female characters are also more sexually expressive than their male counterparts, and *The Lady of The Shroud* in particular illustrates how their freedom of sexual expression may be perceived in a more positive light.

The Foreign Female and Degeneration

An understanding of *The Lady of the Shroud* would be incomplete without acknowledging Stoker's interest in degeneration theory, displaying how his work at once embraces certain Edwardian views on non-English Others while simultaneously rejecting others. Emerging from Darwinian discourse, the theory of degeneration initially described how, instead of adapting to their new environment, a number of animal species underwent a regression, or as two Parisian doctors put it in 1895, shifted from a more perfect state of being to a decidedly less perfect one (Magnan and Legrain 76). This regression to an atavistic condition, would, it was believed, lead to the eventual extinction of said species (Magnan and Legrain 79). Although degeneration theory was initially observed in non-human animals, by the mid-nineteenth century, it had become an oft-used system of classification for human beings as well. Degeneration theory was applied to the fields of criminal anthropology to explain how certain individuals were by nature more prone to criminality than others, or disposed to distinguishing attributes based on cultural origin and class. The scientifically astute Stoker was of course well acquainted with this pseudoscience, and this is especially

evident in *Dracula*. Therein, Mina tellingly reveals, "The Count is a criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him, and *qua* criminal he is of an imperfectly formed mind" (*D* 296). The mention of Max Nordau and Cesare Lombroso[23] in particular attest to Stoker's familiarity with the concept of physiognomy, where "facial expressions are used … to tell us about the kind of person we see before us" (Hartley 2). Glover further underscores that Stoker "regarded physiognomy as an eminently practical form of knowledge … there are countless references to it scattered throughout his work" (71-72).[24] In *The Lady of the Shroud*, Teuta may certainly be read from a physiognomic perspective, yet unlike *Dracula*'s vampires, she is more ambiguously portrayed.

From the outset of the novel, for instance, she is identified as a mysterious vampiric lady, one possessing strikingly dark eyes. Captain Mirolani reports, "*The last*

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[23] Nordau's 1895 work *Degeneration* holds that humanity—and the Anglo-Saxon race in particular—is regressing to a lesser state of being. Therein, he famously exclaims, "We stand in the midst of a severe mental epidemic; of a sort of black death of degeneration and hysteria" (537). He concludes that humanity will inevitably adapt to this regression. He writes, "The feeble, the degenerate, will perish; the strong will adapt themselves to the acquisitions of civilizations" (550). Lombroso was likewise a great influence upon Stoker. The Italian criminologist's 1876 work *Criminal Man* explores the physical traits associated with moral depravity. In his highly influential text, Lombroso claims that certain individuals display signs of atavism, or a return to a Neanderthal physique, and that specific traits predict a predisposition to a life of crime. He notes in particular that "enormous jaws, high cheek bones … [and] handle-shaped or sessile ears" among other characteristics were common indicators, in addition to "insensitivity to pain, extremely acute sight, tattooing, excessive idleness, love of orgies, and the irresponsible craving of evil for its own sake, the desire not only to extinguish life in the victim, but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh and drink its blood" (xiv-xv). Interestingly, the criminal type envisioned by Lombroso possesses many vampiric attributes echoed in Stoker's own works.

[24] One of the most significant examples of Stoker's espousal of physiognomy is found in *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*. In "Shakespeare Plays—IV," Stoker praises Irving's ability to almost magically transform into the characters he plays. This is particularly true when Irving was cast as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. In his description of Irving's acting capabilities, Stoker emphasises the Jewish stereotypes associated with Shylock:

> It has often amazed me to see the physiognomy of Shylock gradually emerge from the actor's own generous countenance. Though I have seen it done a hundred times I could never understand how the lips thickened, with the red of the lower lip curling out and over after the manner of the typical Hebraic countenance; how the bridge of the nose under his painting—for he used no physical building-up—rose into the Jewish aquiline; and most wonderful of all, how the eyes became velvet and glassy with introspection—eyes which at times could and did flash like lurid fire. (1: 139-40)

thing I saw was the flash of a white face with dark, burning eyes as the figure sank down into the coffin—just as mist or smoke disappears under a breeze" (*LS* 22, author's emphasis). Later, Rupert is equally captivated by Teuta's piercing gaze the first time he encounters her. He underlines how the mysterious lady's dark features sharply contrast with the ghostly pallor of her skin:

> By this time I was fully awake, and the whole position of things came to me in an instant which I shall never—can never—forget: the dim light of the candle, now nearly burned down to the socket, all the dimmer from the fact that the first grey gleam of morning was stealing in round the edges of the heavy curtain; the tall, slim figure in the brown dressing-gown whose over-length trailed on the floor, the black hair showing glossy in the light, and increasing by contrast the marble whiteness of the face, in which the black eyes sent through their stars fiery gleams. She appeared quite in a frenzy of haste; her eagerness was simply irresistible. (*LS* 115)

Although Teuta possesses a coveted pale complexion, her raven locks and coal-coloured starry eyes immediately mark her as a foreign Other. Further, like many of Stoker's monstrous characters, such as *The Jewel of Seven Stars*' Queen Tera, Teuta has noticeably gleaming eyes, suggesting that the devil's fire burns deep within her (*LS* 107). Victorian physiognomists such as Samuel Robert Wells indeed adhered to the belief that the "light-eyed races have attained a higher degree of civilization than the dark races," and further advanced that dark-eyed individuals were physically stronger but had inferior intellects compared to their light-eyed counterparts (238). Dark and/or gleaming eyes are noticeable features of several female antagonists across Stoker's works, such as the weird sisters in *Dracula*, two of whom are dark-skinned and possess "great dark, piercing eyes, that seemed to be almost red when contrasted with the pale

yellow moon," and the other who is fair with "eyes like pale sapphires" (*D* 42).[25] Significantly, Teuta possesses features of both vampire types, and as a light-skinned, dark-eyed beauty, is more ambiguously portrayed than her evil consoeurs. Her hair colour, too, is also important from a physiognomic point of view. Dark tresses were typically seen as undesirable by many in Stoker's day, and Galia Ofek underlines that "the owner of dark hair … was typified as a strong, independent, energetic and therefore threatening woman" (62). Considering her various physical characteristics, Teuta initially appears to be a dark and dangerous foreigner in Rupert's eyes, at a time when "the light races were increasingly identified with purity and spirituality … [and] the dark races became the representatives of corruption, decay, and materiality or sensuality" (Halberstam, *Skin Shows* 79). From a contemporary physiognomic perspective, Teuta's features appear to function as markers of racial degeneracy, yet, as we shall see, Stoker turns these same traits into desirable characteristics later in the tale, displaying a veritable progression from his much more categorical views on race presented in *Dracula*.[26]

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[25] Stoker's dark vampire ladies of his Gothic fiction notably contrast with the heroines of his romance novels. In his 1895 novel *The Shoulder of Shasta*, for instance, Esse Elstree possesses "dazzling white teeth," "blue eyes flooded with merriment," and a "tangle of gold hair [that] shook like the fleck of falling sunshine" (29).

[26] It is noteworthy that anti-Semitic undertones plague the text of *Dracula*, and attest to Stoker's interest in the pseudoscience of physiognomy. As Halberstam observes, "The anatomy of the vampire … compares remarkably to anti-Semitic studies of Jewish physiognomy" (*Skin Shows* 14). When he first encounters him, Jonathan relates that Count Dracula possesses "a strong a very strong—aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils … and hair growing scantily round the temples but profusely elsewhere" (*D* 23). Further, the Count's mouth is "fixed and cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; there protruding over the lips … his breath was rank … a horrible feeling of nausea came over me" (*D* 23-24). Jonathan also remarks that "there were hairs in the centre of the palm" (*D* 24), a trait commonly associated with masturbation in Stoker's day. Dracula's physical appearance suggests that he is a carrier of disease, and of syphilis in particular. Carol Margaret Davison indeed underlines, "Stoker's representation of vampirism clearly taps into contemporary syphilophobia. The Count imperils Christian British family values as he infects and transforms upright British women into sexually aggressive anti-mothers" (*Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature* 147). Thus, the Count's revolting physique evokes syphilophobia in *Dracula*, just as Teuta's sickly disposition might likewise

Aside from the sinister features of the foreign female, Stoker also draws attention to the idea of intermarriage in his text, and initially seems to indicate that the practice leads to degeneration. It was through intermarriage, many believed, that degeneration occurred, as the purity of English blood would forever be compromised through racial mixing. Pick underscores that "inter-marriage [was regarded] as 'contamination' … creating a kind of un-assimilable core" (216). This was particularly true around the turn of the century, at a time when "race-thinking gave way to full-fledged racism" (Halberstam, *Skin Shows* 78). Miscegenation was thus considered to be a toxic practice that jeopardised the interests of the nation, but was equally deemed a menace to English expatriates (and in Rupert's case Anglo-Irish expatriates) living beyond England's borders. In *The Lady of the Shroud*, the prospect of intermarriage between Rupert and Teuta is initially presented in a negative light. Indeed, earlier in the novel, Aunt Janet voices her concern about the issue of intermarriage between Scots and Blue Mountaineers. She reveals, "I think the poor [Scottish] girls, who may feel a bit strange in a new country like this, where the ways are so different from ours, will feel easier when they know that there are some of their own mankind near them" (*LS* 100). She then goes on to suggest that women should ideally be wedded before they come to the Land of the Blue Mountains, and proposes, "Perhaps it might be well that those of them who are engaged to each other—I know there are some—should marry before they come out here" (*LS* 100). Aunt Janet seems to infer that the Blue Mountaineers are noble people, but not suitable mates for marriage. Along the same

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gesture towards a syphilitic appearance in *The Lady of the Shroud*. However, it is important to note that Teuta is less threatening than the Count because she does not invade England and remains a stationary—rather than wandering—ethnic Other.

lines, she is later horrified at the prospect that her nephew might marry a foreigner, evidenced by her prophetic dream in which she envisions the as yet unknown Lady of the Shroud as a corpse bride. Rupert's aunt portrays the mysterious woman as having "black locks and … [a] winsome face" (*LS* 133). She then details how she personifies Death itself:

> All this I've told ye was well; but oh, laddie, there was a dreadful lack o' livin' joy such as I should expect from the woman whom my boy had chosen for his wife—and at the marriage coupling, too! And no wonder, when all is said; for though the marriage veil o' love was fine, an' the garland o' flowers was fresh-gathered, underneath them a' was nane ither than a ghastly shroud. As I looked in my veesion—or maybe dream—I expectit to see the worms crawl round the flagstane at her feet. If 'twas not Death, laddie dear, that stood by ye, it was the shadow o' Death that made the darkness round ye, that neither the light o' candles nor the smoke o' heathen incense could pierce. (*LS* 134)

Though admittedly beautiful, Teuta is nevertheless portrayed as a crumbling cadaver, a ghostly shell of a woman who resembles a zombie more than a newlywed. Certainly the many unknowns surrounding Teuta contribute to her fearful and even monstrous aura. It is worth comparing Aunt Janet's experience of second-sight with the Gothic wedding that takes place in reality, as predicted. The hero relates how his elusive bride matches his aunt's nightmarish vision:

> Out of the darkness stepped the same tall figure … He led by the hand my Lady, still clad in her Shroud; but over it, descending from the crown of her head, was a veil of very old and magnificent lace of astonishing fineness. Even in that dim light I could note the exquisite beauty of the fabric. The veil was fastened with a bunch of tiny sprays of orange-blossom mingled with cypress and laurel—a strange combination. In her hand she carried a great bouquet of the same. Its sweet intoxicating odour floated up to my nostrils. It and the sentiment which its very presence evoked made me quiver … My Lady, of course, understood the ritual, and knew the words which the priest was speaking, and of her own accord put out her hand … It thrilled me to

> touch my Lady's hand, even under such mysterious conditions. (*LS* 192-93)

In Aunt Janet's dream, Teuta is represented as a beautiful yet ghoulish bride, one who sharply contrasts with images of the lively groom, who is pictured as strong and stalwart throughout the tale. While Rupert is said to be "of almost giant stature and strength" (*LS* 67), the object of his affection is pictured as a feeble shell of a woman who appears more ghostly than human. Indeed, the hero of the tale is both physically and intellectually appealing, possessing many of the qualities that the Lady of the Shroud lacks in her initial portrayals. Rupert is clearly uneasy throughout the entire wedding ceremony and "accepts his part as bridegroom despite being certain that such a union will hardly be conventional" (Gibson 244). Catherine Wynne adds that the grim tableau portrayed in *The Lady of the Shroud* establishes a link between the "bed and crypt," and underlines that the wedding scene "is very deliberately a performance that experiments with the possibilities of transgression as it conflates the bed and crypt and plays out anxieties of male impotence and female dissimulation. In *The Lady of the Shroud* Irish Gothic meets Victorian stage in the convergence of fear and fantasy" (258). Certainly, Stoker may be said to juxtapose the concepts of death and desire in many of his works, as observed with Jonathan's seduction scene in *Dracula* as well as the titillating episode of the unwrapping of the mummy in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. Yet I would add that in much of the author's fiction, all is not always as it seems and first impressions about women often turn out to be false, as is precisely the case in *The Lady of the Shroud*.

After the ceremony, Teuta immediately departs from her husband's side, leaving the marriage unconsummated. This scene echoes the marriage of Geneviève

Ward, who similarly left her husband "at the church door," as examined earlier in this chapter. In the text, Rupert naturally remonstrates when Teuta announces she must leave. He declares, "You are now my wife. This is our wedding-night; and surely your place is with me!" (*LS* 197). Despite his protests, his bride refuses to give in to his requests, displaying once again how she holds the upper hand in the relationship and that she is not as sexually available as her midnight rendezvous would suggest. The closing scene of Book V emphasises the Gothic nature of the story, and again recalls Ward's ill-fated wedding:

> With one long kiss, and a straining in each other's arms, which left me tingling for long after we had lost sight of each other, we parted. I stood and watched her as her white figure, gliding through the deepening gloom, faded as the forest thickened. It surely was no optical delusion or a phantom of the mind that her shrouded arm was raised as though in blessing or farewell before the darkness swallowed her up. (*LS* 198)

As with *The Snake Pass'* Norah Joyce,[27] marriage dampens Teuta's bright libidinal aura, and seems to point to the potential dangers of intermarriage. Yet surprisingly, the corpse bride and sexually unavailable spouse later redeems herself entirely, displaying how Stoker adheres to traditional Edwardian views on degeneration, only to challenge those same views soon thereafter.

Although many of Stoker's contemporaries "imagined that racial mixing resulted in 'poisoned' or contaminated blood" (Pal-Lapinski 36), Rupert's marriage to the foreign Teuta actually turns out to be a happy and fruitful union after all, despite Aunt Janet's foreboding dream and Teuta's deathly demeanour. The Lady of the

[27] The trope of the desexualised bride can also be observed in Stoker's 1890 novel *The Snake's Pass*. In the text, the previously affectionate heroine Norah Joyce refuses to kiss her future husband Arthur Severn on their wedding day, right before the ceremony. She is concerned with social appearances, asking, "What would they say? And, besides, it would be unlucky" (214).

Shroud indeed proves herself just as worthy and formidable as an English bride and several episodes attest to her exemplary character later in the tale. When Rupert's English cousin Ernest visits the Land of the Blue Mountains, for instance, he unwittingly insults Teuta by treating her like a servant, even though she is soon-to-be Queen consort. Rupert's servant Rooke reports how Ernest's insulting behaviour only serves to emphasise Teuta's virtuous character:

> When he was close up to the Voivodin, and she put out her hand to take his, he put forward *one finger*! … The Voivodin still kept her splendid self-control. Raising the finger put forward by the guest with the same deference as though it had been the hand of a King, she bent her head down and kissed it. Her duty of courtesy now done, she was preparing to rise, when he put his hand into his pocket, and, pulling out a sovereign, offered it to her … He doubtless thought that he was doing a kindness of the sort usual in England when one 'tips' a housekeeper. But all the same, to one in her position, it was an affront, an insult, open and unmistakable. So it was received by the mountaineers, whose handjars flashed out as one. For a second it was so received even by the Voivodin, who, with face flushing scarlet, and the stars in her eyes flaming red, sprang to her feet. But in that second she had regained herself, and to all appearances her righteous anger passed away. (*LS* 280-81, author's emphasis)

Ernest's disastrous visit to Teuta's country displays the baseness of some Englishmen and the admirable qualities of certain foreigners, a significant departure from the manner in which Stoker depicts non-English nationals in *Dracula*. Further, Teuta continues to prove herself a worthy bride by producing a healthy male heir, thereby undermining contemporary Edwardian ideas about intermarriage. Whereas scientists in Stoker's day feared miscegenation would produce a weaker, degenerate breed of humans, the author evidently rejects this view, and even implies that intermarriage leads to stronger and more resilient offspring. Aunt Janet accordingly describes the Crown Prince as a veritable picture of health soon after his birth, noting that he is "in

perfect condition," and adds, "The angels that carried him evidently took the greatest care of him, and before they left him they gave him dower of all their best … he is a born King!" (*LS* 331). It is also worth noting that Teuta is portrayed as an admirable maternal figure, constantly doting upon the beautiful Prince Rupert, who possesses all the best qualities of his parents. Thus, Stoker appears to become more progressive in his thinking over time, and departs from many of his contemporaries who would have scoffed at the notion of intermarriage with a Balkan lady.

Despite the fact that Teuta is portrayed in a positive light in the latter part of the tale, the lady still gives up her rightful claim to the throne, and opts to become Queen Consort instead of Queen of the Land of the Blue Mountains. Her explanation as to why she would rather see her husband Rupert as King appears to be a regressive stance in an otherwise progressive novel:

> We women of Vissarion, in all the history of centuries, have never put ourselves forward in rivalry of our lords … in the history of this Land, when Kingship was existent … it was ruled by that law of masculine supremacy … And it would ill become me, whom my husband honours—wife to the man whom you would honour—to take a part in changing the ancient custom which has been held in honour for all the thousand years, which is the glory of Blue Mountain womanhood. What an example such would be in an age when self-seeking women of other nations seek to forget their womanhood in the struggle to vie in equality with men! Men of the Blue Mountains, I speak for our women when I say that we hold of greatest price the glory of our men. To be their companions is our happiness; to be their wives is the completion of our lives; to be mothers of their children is our share of the glory that is theirs. (*LS* 306-7)

Not only does Teuta praise the long-standing tradition of masculine hegemony, but she also mocks "self-seeking women of other nations" who demand equal rights, which undoubtedly translates to the suffragettes of England. Because of Teuta's traditional views on gender, critics have generally dismissed her as an "appropriated, colonized

Victorian woman, the absolute anti-type of the New Woman" (Cain 165). The ending of Stoker's tale ostensibly ratifies this romanticised view of the sexes, and further seems to function as a warning to nations (or individuals) who might disrupt this sacred order: "God help the nation that attacks 'Balka' or any part of it, so long as Rupert and Teuta live in the hearts of that people, and bind them into an irresistible unity" (*LS* 352). Despite the fact that such passages appear to endorse traditional views on the sexes, I would venture to argue that like many of Stoker's happily ever afters, we can understand the closing of *The Lady of the Shroud* as intentionally ironic. The Teuta who dismisses feminism is not true to herself, and stands in sharp contrast to the strong-willed vampiric lady seen in the first part of the novel. If one considers Ward as a real-life inspiration for Teuta, then her dismissal of feminism at the end of the tale is all the more incongruous. Like *Dracula* and *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, the anti-feminist episodes in *The Lady of the Shroud* may be understood as paradoxical and inconsistent with the rather progressive views on women that the author adhered to in his personal life. In short, Stoker integrates contemporary Edwardian ideas about degeneration into his lesser-known vampire novel, but at the same time presents intermarriage in a positive light, suggesting his works are more nuanced than first meet the eye. While Teuta's dark facial features and deathly pallor at first seem to signal her degenerate foreignness, she later reveals herself to be a powerful lady who is a perfect fit for the equally stalwart Rupert. The fact that the marriage produces a healthy male heir indicates that Stoker disregards many of the more conservative ideas of his contemporaries, who believed miscegenation created an ill-equipped, regressive species. Although Teuta has generally been understood as an anti-feminist persona who

gives up her power for her husband, I believe that the first part of the novel, where she is depicted as a strong and resilient heroine, should not be forgotten. Like many of the endings of Stoker's Gothic tales, the closing of *The Lady of the Shroud* may be understood as intentionally ironic, and arguably designed to mock repressive hegemonic structures that would readily strip a queen of her birthright.

Stoker's *The Lady of the Shroud* represents the idea of feminine transgression with the figure of the foreign female, who is in many ways depicted as a veritable threat to the patriarchy in the author's lesser-known vampire novel. Although *Dracula* tells the tale of an Eastern European invader who travels to England, Stoker explores a more nuanced view of the outsider in *The Lady of the Shroud*. Inspired by and at the same time departing from Halberstam's understanding of race as posited in *Skin Shows*, this chapter displays how the fears and anxieties of Edwardian England are in many ways embodied by the exotic female Other, yet at the same time illustrates that the author is not as prejudicial as is often imagined. Stoker first presents Teuta as a vampiric lady, and in her incarnation as an undead creature of the night, she symbolises how foreigners were viewed as societal bloodsuckers that threatened English nationals at home and abroad. The exotic woman is next depicted as a fallen siren, and her promiscuous behaviour throughout the first few sections of the novel reveal how she holds libidinal power over her male counterparts. The novel is finally explored in light of contemporary ideas about degeneration and the fear of miscegenation between English and foreign nationals. With the intermarriage of an Anglo-Irish man and a Balkan woman, Stoker illustrates how his fiction progresses with time, especially in light of the fact that by the close of the Edwardian period—when the novel hit

shelves—the women's movement was gaining more and more supporters. Stoker's feminist friend, Geneviève Ward, to whom he dedicated *The Lady of the Shroud*, also inspired his writings, and the titular dame of the tale possesses several commonalities with Ward. Although Stoker undoubtedly expressed prejudicial views about many groups of non-English nationals in his writings, *The Lady of the Shroud* reveals that the Other is not consistently and unequivocally demonised, and the English themselves are often presented in an unflattering light. Despite the fact that Stoker adheres to many contemporary notions of his day, it is significant that his works also break away from prejudicial views of the exotic Other, revealing—or rather, pulling away the shroud—on an author who is more liberal than one might otherwise expect. In fact, many of the ostensibly conservative passages of *The Lady of the Shroud* can be read as intentionally ironic, especially if we take our cue from Stoker's former works. In these ways, the novel provides an unconventional reading of the foreign female, one who was perceived as a menacing figure by many of Stoker's contemporaries, but not always by Stoker himself. The rather progressive portrayal of the ethnic woman in the author's forgotten vampire tale ultimately sheds light onto the Edwardian fear of the gendered and cultural Other, and reveals the societal changes occurring in England at the end of the long nineteenth century. Aside from the important place held by non-English nationals in the Edwardian imagination, one figure—the New Woman—was the most controversial of them all, and Stoker explores this feminine type at length in *The Lair of the White Worm*.

Chapter 4

"She can play her game better alone": The New Woman in *The Lair of the White Worm*

> I could not but feel that she was glad to be rid of us. She can play her game better alone!
>
> —Sir Nathaniel de Salis, *The Lair of the White Worm*

Just as Stoker's ethnic female represents a powerful force of reckoning, women who demanded equality and challenged the status quo also helped shape the author's vision of womanhood. In the post-Edwardian period, many ambitious dames sought greater social and political mobility, and this sentiment is well captured in Stoker's 1911 novel *The Lair of the White Worm*, where the author provides a compelling portrait of this legendary persona, a figure who became known as the "New Woman." Seen as a menace to patriarchal power, the New Woman was a divisive figure that was admired by some, but feared and reviled by most. In the author's final novel, the New Woman is represented in the figure of Lady Arabella March, a primeval serpent-lady whose unbecoming ways help depict her in an animalesque light.[1] In *The Lair of the White Worm*, Stoker first presents his vision of the New Woman as a failed angel in the house. Widowed and husband hungry, Lady Arabella lacks the qualities deemed most valuable for the ideal wife, yet at the same time may be seen as a victim of a

[1] *The Lair of the White Worm* recounts the adventures of a young Australian named Adam Salton, who, having inherited an estate from his uncle Richard Salton, travels to England to become acquainted with his benefactor. Richard resides in a historically rich part of central Britain, once referred to as the old kingdom of Mercia. Adam is introduced to Sir Nathaniel de Salis, an amateur geologist, historian and folklorist, who takes Adam under his wing and teaches him about the surrounding area, including Mercy Farm and Diana's Grove, where strange and mystical happenings have been reported. Sir Nathaniel relates the legend of the White Worm, a giant primeval serpent that terrorised local inhabitants thousands of years ago. Shortly thereafter, the prehistoric serpent resurfaces, attacking animals and people alike. Adam and Sir Nathaniel discover that a local eccentric woman, Lady Arabella March, is the human manifestation of the serpent and is able to shapeshift at will. She attacks and consumes the West African slave Oolanga when he attempts to seduce her. Meanwhile, another local villain, Edgar Caswell, uses his mesmeric powers against a local girl, Lilla Watford. Mimi Watford, Lilla's cousin and Adam's beloved, tries to prevent Edgar from harming her, but he eventually succeeds in killing Lilla by means of psychic torture. Lady Arabella, who initially plans to marry Edgar, later turns against him, and plans to murder him. Before she succeeds in her dark quest, however, Adam and Sir Nathaniel destroy her by filling the worm-hole in which she resides with explosives. Lady Arabella and Edgar's homes are simultaneously destroyed, the first by dynamite and the second by lightening. Having rid Mercia of its evildoers, Adam lives happily ever after with his newly minted bride, Mimi.

prejudicial patriarchal system. The author next portrays the character of the New Woman as a wild creature of sorts. In her serpentine guise, Lady Arabella becomes a poisonous presence to all, displaying how the emancipated female was similarly perceived as a beastly force of reckoning, a figure, however, that Stoker arguably sympathises with. Stoker lastly presents the New Woman as a masculinised individual of sorts. Lady Arabella possesses the ability to penetrate both men and women alike, revealing the phallic undertones woven into the fabric of the text, and paralleling the manner in which the suffragettes were similarly depicted as unfeminine women. Turning to Sally Ledger's *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle*, this chapter illustrates how Stoker's New Woman is often presented as a monstrous disruptor of social order, a figure who aims to thwart masculine ambitions and challenge heteronormativity. Yet as with Stoker's other monsters, there are sympathetic undertones in the depiction of Lady Arabella as well, perhaps reflective of the fact that the author himself befriended several New Women who consistently defied societal norms. Through her portrayal as a failed angel in the house, her image as a wild creature, and her representation as a masculinised dame, *The Lair of the White Worm* portrays the New Woman as one of the many faces of rebellious femininity in the changing world of post-Edwardian England. Lady Arabella's negative depiction can often be understood as intentionally ironic, especially given Stoker's friendship with several important feminists of his day, and his perception of women seems to progress over the course of his writing career.

In Ledger's *The New Woman*, the author explores the role and function of the New Woman as well as the Woman Question in England towards the end of the

Victorian era. Ledger first notes that the expression "New Woman" "was 'christened' in 1894," and notes that the issue of the Woman Question was a frequent subject of debate in Britain in the 1880s and 1890s. She indicates that "it was Ouida [Maria Louise Ramé] who extrapolated the now famous—and then infamous—phrase 'the New Woman' from Sarah Grand's essay 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question'" (9). At the time, the expression "New Woman" was frequently used in the context of discussing the New Woman novel, rather than "the 'real' New Woman (that is, late Victorian feminists)" (Ledger 9). The concept of New Womanhood was further understood from various angles of vision, and no single definition could encapsulate the true meaning of this revolutionary model of femininity, as Ledger asserts:

> The New Woman of the *fin de siècle* had a multiple identity. She was, variously, a feminist activist, a social reformer, a popular novelist, a suffragette playwright, a woman poet; she was also often a fictional construct, a discursive response to the activities of the late nineteenth-century women's movement. (1)

In this way, the New Woman was regarded as a figure both shifting and unstable, a contradictory persona that could not easily fit within a single definable category of femininity. One example Ledger provides of the New Woman's many incongruous portrayals is her representation as a female at once lascivious and asexual (6). The author reveals, "On the one hand she was regarded as sexually transgressive … on the other hand New Woman writers … had little or no conception of female sexual desire" (6). The image of the New Woman was thus inconsistent and riddled with contradictions in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century imagination, and this is particularly true of her depiction in *The Lair of the White Worm*.

Ledger's examination of the fin-de-siècle New Woman significantly borrows from Michel Foucault's notion of dominant and reverse discourses of sexuality, and contends that the plight of women may similarly be understood in such terms:

> The widespread attacks on the New Woman—which included claims that she was a threat to the human race, was probably an infanticidal mother and at the very least sexually 'abnormal'—were anti-feminist in design and may well have had the effect of undermining and controlling feminist women. At the same time, though, in Foucauldian terms the hostile dominant discourse on the New Woman made possible 'the formation of a "reverse" discourse': the New Woman began to speak on her own behalf. (10)

Thus, efforts made by the dominant discourse to undermine the emancipated female had the unintentional effect of prying "open a space for … alternative views on the New Woman" (Ledger 20). This enabled early feminists to gain a voice and influence in such areas as marriage, divorce, and property laws, and eventually the right to vote. Ledger thus reveals that although the New Woman was often portrayed in a negative light around the close of the long nineteenth century, her emergence precipitated the beginnings of inevitable change that was to come. Inspired by Ledger's understanding of the New Woman in fin-de-siècle England, one may examine how Stoker views this revolutionary female figure in *The Lair of the White Worm*, but not before exploring the social and personal forces that helped shape the author's vision of femininity in his tale.

It is indeed essential to reflect upon the significant events occurring in England at the time the novel is set as well as when it was produced. First, the author set his final novel in 1860, and published it in 1911. Yet, as we shall see, Stoker often treats his central antagonist Lady Arabella as a contemporary post-Edwardian figure rather

than a product of mid-Victorian England. Arguably the most significant event to occur in terms of women's rights around the novel's setting was the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857. Carolyn Nelson relates that the Act essentially secularised divorce proceedings, and abolished the previously required Act of Parliament to initiate the process (xxi). Although the Act made divorce more accessible to the masses and allowed women to secure some property rights, it also posed a double standard; while infidelity on a wife's part was sufficient grounds for a husband to request a divorce, for a wife to make the same demand, she had to provide evidence of her spouse's infidelity in addition to proof of cruelty or mistreatment (xxii). Thus, although the Matrimonial Causes Act aimed to make divorce more accessible, it only truly simplified proceedings for men and it continued to be challenging for women to petition for divorce. Ledger adds that acts following later in the century were more significant in terms of women's rights,[2] yet the 1857 Act remains the one most relevant to the setting of Stoker's novel.

It is further noteworthy that the suffragette cause was not underway by 1860, even though Lady Arabella is explicitly referred to as a having "the want of principle of a suffragette" (*LWW* 290). Sophia A. van Wingerden identifies the early years of the suffrage movement loosely between 1870 and 1884, and further notes that the first public meeting of English suffragists only occurred in April 1868 (24). Yet the very extreme type of suffragette that Stoker refers to in the novel emerges even later. Indeed, Ellen Carol DuBois relates that "disruptive suffragette radicals … surfaced in

[2] Ledger notes, "The Married Woman's Property Act of 1882 was the first comprehensive piece of legislation to give property rights to married women, and in 1891 an Act was passed which denied men 'conjugal rights' to their wives' bodies without their wives' consent" (11).

England about 1906," and the aggressive tactics they employed in the fight to gain the right to vote distinguished them from mainstream suffragists (265). Further, by 1911—the year in which the novel was published—suffragettes were regarded with even more disdain; with the death of Edward VII a year earlier and the failure of the Second Conciliation Bill which promised women "limited franchise," they again took to the streets. Carolyn Nelson relates that on 21 November 1911, over two-hundred women were arrested when several government and private businesses were vandalised, adding that window smashing was by then regarded as an official policy of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) (xxiv). Thus, Stoker's labelling of Lady Arabella as a suffragette is clearly incongruous with a mid-Victorian setting and is much more relevant to the post-Edwardian climate in which the novel was produced. I am not suggesting that this is an error on Stoker's part, however. Rather, the historically inaccurate labelling of Lady Arabella as a suffragette is one of two significant (as well as intentionally ironic) inconsistencies in *The Lair of the White Worm*, the other being the rather ironic choice of illustrator.

William Rider and Son solicited artist Pamela Colman Smith to design and execute a total of six illustrations for the original edition of Stoker's *The Lair of the White Worm*.[3] Mentioned in passing as a "fellow guest" of the Lyceum Theatre in

[3] William Rider and Son had previously collaborated with Pamela Colman Smith on the Rider-Waite tarot deck, which Hopkins notes is "the now standard Tarot pack" (*Bram Stoker* 139). Robert Place also considers it to be "the model to which other Tarots are compared," and adds that this classic deck "was envisioned by the famous occultist Arthur Edward Waite, created with Waite's direction by the visionary artist Pamela Colman Smith, and first published in 1909 by William Rider and Son of London" (38). Given their successful collaboration in 1909, it is likely that William Rider and Son initiated the selection of Smith as illustrator two years later for *The Lair of the White Worm*. Yet Stoker would hypothetically have held enough sway at the time to protest his publisher's decision if he were a true anti-suffragist. His ostensible approval of his publisher's choice of illustrator thus helps suggest that the anti-suffragist comments in the novel are rather insincere.

Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving (1: 325), Smith was a close friend of Stoker's, a fact evidenced by their written correspondence. As a case in point, Glover relates that "Smith's card to Stoker, Christmas 1903, was inscribed to 'Mr Uncle Bram from Pixie Pamela,'" displaying the lack of conventionalities between the two (154). Smith was not only Stoker's friend and illustrator, but also a prominent member of the Suffrage Atelier. Established in February 1909, the Suffrage Atelier used plays and artwork to help sensitise individuals to the suffragette cause.[4] Some of Smith's significant propaganda pieces include illustrations for Edward Gordon Craig's magazine *The Page* in 1901 as well as a poster and postcard entitled: "A Bird in Hand" (Tickner 30, 35). Also noteworthy is the fact that both Smith and Edith Craig displayed "interest in the figure of the Egyptian snake goddess … and … Pamela Colman Smith sometimes depicted both herself and Edith Craig with tails" (Hopkins, *Bram Stoker* 163). This suggests that Smith would have been particularly enthusiastic about illustrating a novel featuring a serpent woman. The fact that Stoker (or rather his misogynist characters) critiques the suffragette in *The Lair of the White Worm* yet had this same work illustrated by one undermines attempts to paint him as categorically anti-feminist. Instead, the author often appears to be more of a proto-feminist than not, and if he berates the suffragette, does so ironically rather than sincerely. Unwilling to shout the merits of the women's movement directly, Stoker's relations with proto-feminists, feminists, and suffragettes alike speak volumes of his stance on the Woman Question, and this is particularly true of his personal and professional relationship with Smith. In

[4] Similarly, Edith Craig was a dedicated member of the Actress' Franchise League (AFL), described as "a radical organization founded in 1908 that devoted itself to theatrical propaganda," and staged two plays for the AFL, *How the Vote Was Won* and *A Pageant of Great Women* (Auerbach, *Ellen Terry* 421).

short, the setting and publication of Stoker's final novel as well as his friendship with his suffragette illustrator reveal how the author is more feminist friendly than is often thought. With this in mind, one may turn to an examination of the New Woman in *The Lair of the White Worm*, but not before a brief engagement with her masculine equivalent, the New Man.

The New Man

Before commencing an in-depth look at Stoker's treatment of the New Woman in his final novel, it is important to be aware of her lesser-known counterpart, the New Man. Just as the New Woman was a masculinised figure, the New Man was equally viewed as an effeminate individual with same-sex tendencies, one "formally recognised by the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which outlawed homosexuality" (Ledger 83). Oscar Wilde, an acquaintance of Stoker's,[5] is a good example of a turn-of-the-century New Man (who also identified as a dandy).[6] Shunned by the majority of his friends and acquaintances after his infamous 1895 trials,[7] Wilde

[5] Bram Stoker met Wilde in university, having proposed him for membership of the university's Philosophical Society while he was president. Later, Florence Balcombe, a sweetheart of Wilde's, left him in order to marry Stoker. The Stokers maintained a distant but courteous relationship with Wilde up until his trials. Stoker's private thoughts on the trials remain unknown (Belford 246). Talia Schaffer theorises that he addresses Wilde's trials in a covert fashion across his fiction. She observes, "*Dracula* explores Stoker's fear and anxiety as a closeted homosexual man during Oscar Wilde's trial … [The novel's] peculiar tonality of horror derives from Stoker's emotions at this unique moment in gay history" (381).

[6] Like the New Man, the dandy equally eschewed conventional notions of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century masculinity. Ledger underscores that "the decadent and the dandy undermined the Victorians' valorisation of a robust, muscular brand of British masculinity deemed to be crucial to the maintenance of the British Empire" (94).

[7] The 1895 trials of Oscar Wilde ushered in a new understanding of homosexuality in England. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes that the 1890s marked "the beginnings of a dissemination across classes of language about male homosexuality (e.g., the word 'homosexual'), and with the medicalization of homosexuality" (*Between Men* 179). Sedgwick adds that during this period, intercourse between men was not directly referred to, but known instead as an "unspeakable act," and this trope of the unspeakable constantly manifests itself in literary works of the fin de siècle (*Between Men* 94).

could certainly empathise with the plight of women; there is evidence to suggest that he "had feminist sympathies" as demonstrated by his friendship with actress and feminist Sarah Bernhardt as well as his two-year stint as editor of a women's rights magazine, *The Woman's World* (Finney 67). The figures of the dandy and New Woman further possessed many interesting parallels, and Gail Finney indicates how "both character types represented a threat to established culture, especially as far as sex and gender were concerned." She adds, "Both the dandy and the New Woman opposed the rigid Victorian division between the sexes and moved in the direction of androgyny … in the dandy inclined towards male effeminacy and the New Woman towards female mannishness (68). This displays how not only women suffered at the hands of a rigid patriarchal system, but also how unfit men were seen as veritable threats to masculine hegemony in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century England.

Many of Stoker's contemporaries critiqued what they perceived as the socially disruptive New Man, a figure thought to betray their sex by supporting women's suffrage. In 1894, for instance, author Charles Harper warned that "the New Woman, if a mother at all, will be the mother of a New Man, as different, indeed, from the present race as possible … [There is] the prospect of peopling the world with stunted and hydrocephalic children … [which could lead to the] ultimate extinction of the race" (qtd. in Ledger 18). Other sources, such as the widely read *Punch* magazine, presented the New Man as the weak-willed helpmate of the New Woman, an "anxious, downtrodden house-husband of an emancipated wife" (Willis 57). Linda Dowling further elucidates how *Punch* attempted to equate New Manhood with effeminacy:

> *Punch* devoted a good deal of space to the eugenic dangers raised by contemporary male effeminacy and female mannishness; the New

> Woman "made further development in generations to come quite impossible" … while the "New Man" was, in a word, "Woman." (445)

Seen as both the progeny and/or spouse of the New Woman, the New Man's emasculate persona was considered a veritable threat to the prevailing heteronormative worldview. Though not as widely acknowledged as the New Woman, the New Man was an equally disdainful figure that anti-suffragist forces sought to discredit and demasculinise.

In *The Lair of the White Worm*, there is no New Man per say, yet his antithesis is represented in the strong and stalwart hero of the tale, Adam Salton. Adam is a modern man who originally hails from Australia, and in many ways echoes the equally virile Quincey Morris in *Dracula*.[8] Unlike the effeminate New Man, Adam represents an idealised vision of post-Edwardian masculinity, and is a strong, stalwart, and self-sufficient male. Possessing both physically and psychologically desirable characteristics, Adam is described as a "willing and attentive pupil" as well as "a dapper young gentleman" (*LWW* 169, 174). He is further said to be an individual "specially eligible, for he did not belong to a class in which barriers of caste were strong," and one who "did not let the grass grow under his feet in any matter which he had undertaken, or in which he was interested" (*LWW* 183, 208). Thus, the hero is a firm and resolute individual who, unlike the New Man, is the veritable embodiment of early twentieth-century manliness. Perhaps the scene which best encapsulates Adam's view of the opposite sex occurs when he first encounters his future wife Mimi. Stoker relates, "So soon as Adam's eyes met those of the younger girl, who stood nearest to

[8] Stephen Arata observes, "Morris … leads a double life in *Dracula*. He stands with his allies in Anglo-Saxon brotherhood, but he also, as a representative of an America about to emerge as the world's foremost imperial power, threatens British superiority as surely as Dracula does" (129).

him, some sort of electricity flashed—that divine spark which begins by recognition, and ends in obedience. Men call it 'Love'" (*LWW* 181-82). For Adam, love tellingly "ends in obedience," indicating how he is the antithesis of the New Man, whose relationship with the New Woman was instead based on equality. With this understanding of the New Man in mind, one may now turn to an in-depth look at the infamous figure of the New Woman in Stoker's serpent-centred tale.

The New Woman as Failed Angel in the House

In *The Lair of the White Worm*, the New Woman—embodied by the character of Lady Arabella March—is first represented as a failed angel in the house, and becomes the antithesis of idealised femininity throughout the tale. The angel in the house, a term coined by Coventry Patmore in his narrative poem of the same name, details his vision of the perfect wife.[9] Nel Noddings observes that the angel in the house myth propagates the image of woman as a figure of "natural goodness, [possessing] an innate allegiance to a 'law of kindness'" (59). Yet as Noddings further underscores, there is a dark side to this fantasy of womanhood as well:

> This same description [of the angel in the house] extols her as infantile, weak, and mindless—a creature in constant need of supervision and protection. Undertones of sadism run through Coventry Patmore's hymn to the angel who is in reality a prisoner in the house she graces. The alleged angel was an image that all Victorian women were supposed to internalize. (59)

[9] Patmore's *The Angel in the House*—an extensive epitaph to Patmore's saintly wife Emily—was first published in 1854, and was later expanded upon in 1856, 1860, and 1863. The poem describes a lover's obsession and eventual marriage to the heavenly Honoria, a woman whose perfection renders her more angelic than human. It is revealed that the wooer is consumed with loving thoughts of his beloved day and night. Patmore writes, "For joy of her he cannot sleep; / Her beauty haunts him all the night; / It melts his heart, it makes him weep / For wonder, worship, and delight" (3.9-12).

For Noddings, adhering to the standards of this saintly feminine type meant the loss of a sense of agency for women, and I would add that many early feminists critiqued not only men, but also women who internalised this myth. Indeed, Ledger notes that contemporary authors such as Olive Schreiner held that "the (white, Western European) 'civilised' woman becomes a mere 'sex-parasite'" when she eschews traditional feminine roles (75). The general consensus, however, was that the domestic angel was a model that all ladies should strive to emulate. Stoker initially seems to reinforce this impossible standard of perfection for women in his final novel, yet, as with his other horror tales, he soon reveals that he is more progressive than first meets the eye.

In *The Lair of the White Worm*, Lady Arabella is a far cry from Patmore's saintly vision of womanhood. To begin, the mistress of Diana's Grove is portrayed as a relatively young widow, one whose husband has perished under suspicious circumstances. Lady Arabella insists that her marriage to Captain March was successful, and that she holds memories of "many happy days of my young married life and the more than happy memories of the man I loved and who loved me so much" (*LWW* 319). Her declaration of ideal wifedom is in line with the thinking of the time dictating that it was a woman's responsibility to ensure a man's contentment inside the institution of marriage. As Jenni Calder observes, the responsibility for marital success often fell on the female partner's shoulders. She underlines that "the onus was on the wife to make marriage a success. Wives had a duty to love their husbands, except in extraordinary circumstances, in which case they had a duty to make the best of things. And they had a duty to ensure that their husbands loved them" (59). In the novel, Lady

Arabella's insistence that hers was an idyllic union is doubtful indeed.[10] Sir Nathaniel relates, "The house had … been done up so as to be suitable to bring the bride to. The basement is very strange—almost as strong and as heavy as if it was intended to be a fortress" (*LWW* 257). The juxtaposition of the images of a bride and fortress together conjure up the idea of a veritable prison for Lady Arabella, one she ultimately escapes. This bleak perception of coupledom reflects the reality of many men and women, who saw romance as unnecessary or superfluous to the success of a marriage in Stoker's day. The union was instead conceived as nothing more than a contractual obligation in which women were almost always at a disadvantage. In *The Lair of the White Worm*, Lady Arabella is well aware that she is the disadvantaged partner inside her union, like so many Victorian, Edwardian, and post-Edwardian wives before her. She accordingly takes matters into her own hands, and orchestrates the termination of her marriage in the most brutal way possible.

Stoker strongly implies in the text that Lady Arabella has killed Captain March, or else driven him to suicide. Sir Nathaniel relates to Adam, "Her husband was rich when she married him—or seemed to be. When he committed suicide, it was found that he had nothing at all … her only hope is in a rich marriage. I suppose I need not draw any conclusion. You can do that as well as I can" (*LWW* 176). The author hints that the marriage between Lady Arabella and Captain March was not as idyllic as she purports, and that their union may have been severed not by divorce, but instead by murder. Stoker arguably gestures towards the stigma surrounding the dissolution of

[10] This brings to mind Sedgwick's vision of marriage within the Gothic tradition, wherein "variant allusions to the marriage vow function as maledictions or curses" (*Touching, Feeling* 74). In *The Lair of the White Worm*, marriage is soon followed by death, displaying the manner in which matrimony sometimes becomes a veritable harbinger of doom.

marriage, and how it was much more difficult in 1860s England for women to be granted a divorce, even with the implementation of the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, as previously discussed. Indeed, a wife had to somehow prove her husband's "cruelty or mistreatment," yet as Jennifer Hedgecock points out, this was extremely difficult to demonstrate in a court of law:

> Proving a husband's cruelty, which included "rape, domestic violence, pornography, prostitution, [or] a denial of female sexual anatomy" … was a most humiliating and difficult ordeal. Needless to say, women seldom petitioned for divorce, and violence at home continued, and often curtailed a woman's independence, keeping her subordinated to her husband because she feared him. (71)

Thus, women did, in theory, have certain recourses if they wanted to terminate their marriage, but rarely pursued said recourses for fear of the judgment that inevitably followed. Even when a wife was granted a divorce, her trials and tribulations were far from over, and as Perkin notes, "Punishment was often social exclusion" (124). For these reasons, the death of one of the partners was generally the only way out of the marriage contract in the mid-Victorian era (when the tale is set), and continued to be difficult in the post-Edwardian period (when the tale was published). Lady Arabella's rejection of the role of angel in the house and her refusal to be a victim inside the institution of marriage can thus be understood in a rather sympathetic light, an idea that the author subtly suggests throughout his tale.

Once Lady Arabella has freed herself from her husband, she seeks out other men to exploit financially. Setting her sights on Edgar, the villainess hopes to marry to her advantage:

> Lady Arabella had been getting exceedingly impatient. Her debts, always pressing, were growing to an embarrassing amount. The only hope she had of comfort in life was a good marriage; but the good

> marriage on which she had fixed her eye did not seem to move quickly enough—indeed, it did not seem to move at all—in the right direction. (*LWW* 234)

When Edgar rejects her advances, Lady Arabella's rancorous side is awakened, and her rage is "beyond bounds" (*LWW* 347). She begins to plot Edgar's murder, just as she has her husband's before him. Stoker's villainess thus views her ties to men as temporary unions only, and displays how she is essentially devoid of all emotional attachment. Entering and exiting marriage at will, *The Lair of the White Worm*'s central antagonist recalls the liberated New Woman, who menaces the institution of marriage precisely because she refuses to be at the mercy of the patriarchy, and stands to gain from multiple nuptials. This relates to Ledger's assertion that "one of the defining features of the dominant discourse on the New Woman at the *fin de siècle* was the supposition that the New Woman posed a threat to the institution of marriage" (11). Although Lady Arabella does not shun marriage per se as many New Woman novelists did, she certainly threatens convention by making men—rather than women—the victims of their matrimonial contracts. By objectifying males and regarding them as disposable monetary providers, the mistress of Diana's Grove clearly stands at the opposite end of the spectrum of the idealised angel of the homestead. Yet Stoker also suggests that her true crime is that she is turning an unjust patriarchal system on its head, and that perhaps if a man exploited his wife in a similar fashion, said system would not judge him so harshly.

Lady Arabella's failed marriage and desperate attempts to secure a husband further indicate her fear of becoming an old maid, another quintessential long nineteenth-century character who, like the evil wife, similarly contrasts with the

flawless domestic angel. Although technically widowed, the mistress of Diana's Grove possesses several commonalities with the romantically doomed figure of the spinster.[11] Her futile attempts to seduce Edgar, for instance, suggest that she is cursed to a life of singledom. Instead of returning Lady Arabella's affection, Edgar is obsessed with the young Lilla Watford, whose passive and peaceful nature in every way clashes with the villainess' ruthless persona. At Edgar's homecoming party the women are juxtaposed in a manner that recalls the tale of *Snow White*, where Lady Arabella, channelling the figure of the Evil Queen, is not quite as beautiful as young Lilla, herself embodying the character of Snow White:

> Lady Arabella sat as before at Edgar Caswall's right hand. She was certainly a very beautiful woman, and to all it seemed fitting from her rank and personal qualities that she should be the chosen partner of the heir on his first appearance … There were not lacking some who, whilst admitting all her charm and beauty, placed her in only the second rank of beauty, Lilla Watford being marked as first. There was sufficient divergence of type, as well as of individual beauty, to allow of fair commenting; Lady Arabella represented the aristocratic type, and Lilla that of the commonalty. (*LWW* 183-84)

Although Lady Arabella comes from the higher echelons of society, Lilla exudes a feminine desirability—that of the angel in the house—that her romantic rival can never hope to emulate. Aside from being upstaged by Lilla, the villainess' inability to seduce Edgar is demonstrated in several other episodes throughout the text. Lady Arabella becomes more and more desperate with time, and is continually frustrated by his lack of responsiveness.

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[11] Widows in Stoker's day generally enjoyed a more favourable social status than old maids. As Pat Jalland indicates, "Widowhood, at the end of marriage, was a devastating experience, entailing the loss of the central role of wife, which defined the identity and sense of worth of so many women. The role of widow was stigmatised less than that of the spinster, but it was considerably inferior to that of wife" (230-31). Unattached women were thus socially compromised to varying degrees at the end of the long nineteenth century.

> From the very first he seemed *difficile* … she had shown him in an unmistakable way what her feelings were; indeed, she had made it known to him, in a more overt way than pride should allow … Lady Arabella was cold-blooded, and she was prepared to go through all that might be necessary of indifference, and even insult, to become chatelaine of Castra Regis. (*LWW* 234)

Shortly thereafter, she even writes to Edgar and requests that he call on her, echoing the manner in which Teuta similarly calls upon Rupert in *The Lady of the Shroud*. In her letter, Lady Arabella writes, "I want to have a little chat with you on a subject in which I believe you are interested. Will you kindly call for me … and we can walk a little way together" (*LWW* 241). The female reprobate's letter reveals her sheer desperation, and her very forward invitation would have been considered unacceptable behaviour for a lady of her rank. Despite the fact that Lady Arabella is an upper-class dame with a title, her position does not afford her economic security, effectively making her at once a New Woman and at the same time one who feels shackled to the institution of marriage.

Lady Arabella's fruitless attempts to attract Edgar notably resonate with Mina's perception of the sexually aggressive New Woman in *Dracula*.[12] Mina feels that this bold and unbecoming feminine type should be admonished for pursuing marriageable men:

> Some of the 'New Women' writers will some day start an idea that men and women should be allowed to see each other asleep before proposing or accepting. But I suppose the New Woman won't condescend in future to accept; she will do the proposing herself. And a nice job she will make of it, too! (*D* 86-87)

[12] Glennis Byron characterises the New Woman in Stoker's most famous novel as one who "demands … sexual and social autonomy, and the anxiety caused by her desire to reject traditional roles is one of the most pervasive anxieties in *Dracula*" ("Introduction" 17).

Mina here mocks the image of the independent dame, one who does not abide by traditional rules of social convention, a woman not so dissimilar to Lady Arabella. Yet unlike Mina, Stoker was reportedly "on good terms" with some New Women writers, and Glover contends, "It seems likely that he regarded the New Woman novelists as moral and ideological competitors" rather than subordinates (107). In *The Lair of the White Worm*, Lady Arabella is accordingly portrayed as a New Woman who is physically powerful, yet also socially weak without marital ties. As Senf explains, "Lady Arabella sometimes appears to be a vulnerable woman who desires economic security in the form of a new husband *and* a powerful, larger-than-life creature, both a woman and the incarnation of ancient legend" (*Bram Stoker* 151, author's emphasis). Stoker's central antagonist ultimately cannot escape a patriarchal system dictating that women must either marry or become social outcasts, again revealing how she is not only a villain but also a victim of a hegemonic society.

Although a life spent husbandless is unthinkable to the marriage-obsessed Lady Arabella, Stoker hints that this is precisely the lonely road down which she is headed, and that she will soon become an old maid. Despite the fact that she is still of marriageable age, Adam conceives of his enemy as an "old lady," one who "has been disporting herself in her own way for some thousands of years" (*LWW* 323). Lady Arabella becomes a figure of mockery for the male characters of the tale, which is consistent with the manner in which old maids were perceived in literary works of the period. Nina Auerbach notes that such feminine types represent "the laughingstocks, hungrily and hopelessly swarming around loveable bachelor heroes … [They are] famished for marriage." She adds, "In Victorian England, the steadily rising percentage

of unmarried women made the old maid a familiar domestic appendage and a frightening social harbinger" (*Woman and the Demon* 109). To Auerbach's assertion I would add that older unmarried bachelors were naturally spared the kind of humiliation the old maid continually faced. The hapless spinster thus stands in opposition to the domestic angel, since she chases men without scruples, instead of allowing them to pursue her.[13] In *The Lair of the White Worm*, Lady Arabella's comportment certainly parallels that of the unlovable shrew, thereby revealing how she fails to become the angel in the house that so many women interiorised, and instead resembles the independent figure of the New Woman. Although Ledger contends, "Stoker, like so many writers and novelists at the *fin de siècle*, wanted to terminate the career of the sexualised New Woman and to reinstate in her place a modernised version of the 'angel in the house'" (106), I would hesitate to lump Stoker together with the rest of his conservative contemporaries. He does, of course, criticise the New Woman, but there is strong evidence to suggest that he actually supports the advancement of women's rights when one dissects his fiction at length. Stoker exposes—rather than blindly adheres to—different forms of societal injustice in his day, and his relationships with both active and passive members of the women's movement imply that he is not the misogynist writer he is often made out to be. In short, in *The Lair of the White Worm*, the New Woman is embodied by the mistress of Diana's Grove, a character who fails to fit into the socially accepted mould of femininity. While the traditional woman sought to become an angel in the house, the modernised Lady

[13] In Stoker's *The Shoulder of Shasta*, the old maid Miss Gimp harbours secret desires for the strapping young hero Grizzly Dick, and falsely assumes that he returns her affections. Esse finds this quite amusing, and secretly mocks "the brain-sick, love-sick fancies of an old woman whose whole being seemed a mockery of the possibilities of love" (57).

Arabella is more akin to a "devil of the pit."[14] Stoker first depicts the New Woman as a fallen angel, most particularly with his portrayal of the malevolent Lady Arabella, a woman who represents the nightmarish vision of a late nineteenth and early twentieth-century wife. Although many New Woman writers labelled marriage an institution that effectively imprisoned women, Lady Arabella instead employs matrimony as a means to capture and destroy men. This is evidenced by her ill-fated marriage to Captain March, a union which is implied to end in murder rather than divorce. Despite the fact that the villainess of the tale initially seems to be no more than a greedy husband-killer, Stoker reveals that she represents the vulnerable position of married women, and how a lady's right to petition for divorce was rarely put into practice. Lady Arabella's unsuccessful courting of Edgar also displays her similarity to the stock Victorian character of the spinster, again illustrating how Stoker exposes the unjust labels bestowed upon women who defied societal expectations. Lady Arabella's New Womanhood is thus displayed by her inability to comply with the unattainable standards set by Patmore in his famous, or infamous rather, poem "The Angel in the House." As the antithesis of the perfect wife, Stoker's New Woman—represented as a failed domestic angel—reveals the author's complicity with and support of various forms of transgressive femininity at the end of the long nineteenth century.

[14] In *Dracula*, when Jonathan is left alone with the Count's brides, he remarks, "I am alone in the castle with those awful women. Faugh! Mina is a woman, and there is nought in common. They are devils of the Pit!" (55).

The New Woman as Wild Creature

In Stoker's *The Lair of the White Worm*, the New Woman is further portrayed as a wild creature, one at times identified as more bestial than human. Although the author employs animal imagery throughout his works, his final novel incorporates this trope in a more prominent way. Lady Arabella is by far Stoker's most animalesque antagonist, as her identity continuously vacillates between human and serpentine forms. Adam surmises, "Lady Arabella is of snake nature," and with Sir Nathaniel comes to the conclusion that she and the White Worm are divided manifestations of the same primeval entity (*LWW* 286).[15] From her first appearance, Stoker's female fiend exhibits creaturely characteristics:

> She was clad in some kind of soft white stuff, which clung close to her form, showing to the full every movement of her sinuous figure … She wore a close-fitting cap of some fine fur of dazzling white. Coiled round her white throat was a large necklace of emeralds, whose profusion of colour quite outshone the green of her spectacles … Her voice was peculiar, very low and sweet, and so soft that the dominant note was of sibilation. Her hands, too, were peculiar—long, flexible, white, with a strange movement as of waving gently to and fro. (*LWW* 175)

The mistress of Diana's Grove clearly possesses several serpentine features. Besides sharing the same colouring as the prehistoric White Worm, she is also lithe, has elongated limbs, and wears an emerald necklace carefully twisted around her neck. Her

[15] Sir Nathaniel explains that the word "worm" is misleading, and that the ancient creature purported to lurk below Mercia is more akin to a giant primordial serpent rather than a common earthworm:

> In the dawn of the language, the word "worm" had a somewhat different meaning from that in use to-day. It was an adaptation of the Anglo-Saxon "wyrm," meaning primarily a dragon or snake; or from the Gothic "waurms," a serpent; or the Icelandic "ormur," or the German "wurm." We gather that it conveyed originally an idea of size and power, not as now in the diminutive of both these meanings. (*LWW* 186-87)

While Lady Arabella initially seems to be as harmless as an earthworm, she later reveals the full magnitude of her serpentine powers.

voice equally has a hypnotic quality to it, a common attribute of many female antagonists across Stoker's fiction.

Lady Arabella is further presented as an elusive creature that disappears and reappears at will, suggesting that, like the serpent, she has the ability to camouflage herself. She is able to evade Adam's gaze, for instance, in the episode where she brings the tame mongoose into the woods and hypnotises it, recalling the hypnotised and hypnotising female subject in *Dracula*. Lady Arabella is indeed a chameleon, and Adam reports seeing her "actually dancing in a fantastic sort of way … At last somehow he lost sight of her altogether" (*LWW* 211). This scene displays how the villainess is able to blend into the natural environment around her, once again reinforcing her connection to the serpent. Further, Stoker's female reprobate is frequently described as a "sinuous" individual who moves with a "quick gliding motion" (*LWW* 175). Later in the tale, when she uses her hypnotic powers against Lilla,[16] a less flattering though equally animalesque portrait of the villainess emerges. Adam observes that compared to the dove-like Lilla, "Lady Arabella looked like a soulless, pitiless being, not human, unless it revived old legends of transformed human beings who had lost their humanity in some transformation or in the sweep of natural savagery" (*LWW* 217). *The Lair of the White Worm*'s central antagonist thus hides behind the guise of a beautiful female body in order to circulate freely among unsuspecting humans, and in reality is a cold-blooded creature with a monstrous dual

[16] It is noteworthy that Stoker also employs animal imagery in his portrayal of the saintly Lilla in the novel. The latter is said to be "as gentle as a dove," and is further portrayed as a "harmless, tender-hearted, sweet-natured girl, whose heart was so full of love for all things that in it was no room for the passions of ordinary life—whose nature resembled those doves of St. Columba, whose colour she wore, whose appearance she reflected" (*LWW* 182, 245). The dove-like Lilla naturally serves as a foil to the serpentine Lady Arabella.

nature (or is at least perceived as such by her male enemies). The villainess in fact corresponds to what Auerbach refers to as the oft-cited Victorian monster of the "serpent with a lady's visage," and adds that this "standard type of female demon … [possesses] mixed allegiances to official Christianity, ancient legend, and modern monstrosity" (*Woman and the Demon* 93). Lady Arabella's serpentine descriptions are indeed consistent with longstanding Judeo-Christian thinking which envisions women as agents of the Fall, and reveals how Stoker attempts "to figure animal and female qualities simultaneously in the form of the Arabella-worm" (Punter 184). Like Eve in the Garden of Eden,[17] Stoker's villainess is identified with the serpent, and her deadly bite may be understood as a metaphor for the similarly venomous New Woman. The author thus depicts the mistress of Diana's Grove as more creaturely than human, thereby gesturing towards the contemporaneous notion that any "union with animals beatified a declining humanity" (Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves* 92). Yet as we shall see, Stoker also reveals that animals are sometimes more perceptive than humans, once again demonstrating how the author often departs from the conventional thinking of his day.

Stoker's female fiend distinguishes herself as a wild creature by virtue of her beastly behaviour, more specifically through the predatory instincts she exhibits throughout the text. Lady Arabella's interactions with animals and humans alike illustrate how she mirrors the comportment of carnivorous reptiles, and how she echoes the manner in which the New Woman was similarly perceived. Various beasts alternatively display fear and aggression towards her, since they are capable of sensing

[17] In Genesis, when God asks Eve why she disobeyed Him, she responds, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (3:13).

her concealed animality. In particular, she reveals her manifested hatred for the mongoose, a traditional enemy of the serpent. Adam is horrified by her gruesome butchery of these animals. In one of his first encounters with the upper-class dame, he describes how she kills his pet mongoose when it lunges at her:

> She looked more than ever disdainful … the mongoose jumped at her in a furious attack … the lady drew out a revolver and shot the animal, breaking his backbone. Not satisfied with this, she poured shot after shot into him till the magazine was exhausted … she seemed more furious even than the animal, her face transformed with hate, and as determined to kill as he had appeared to be. (*LWW* 201)

Stoker's female antagonist also charms another of Adam's pet mongooses, only to dispose of it shortly thereafter. Although it appears to be tame in her company, this is only because she has induced it into a cataleptic trance. Adam remarks, "The little creature seemed quite changed. He had been ebulliently active; now he was dull and spiritless—seemed to be dazed … when he was alone with Lady Arabella he kept looking round him in a strange way, as though trying to escape" (*LWW* 211). The hero subsequently discovers the animal dead "with every appearance of having been strangled," apparently by a snake (*LWW* 213). The villainess' hatred of the mongoose is further made palpable in the episode leading up to Oolanga's gruesome murder. She viciously dispatches another mongoose when it lunges at her:

> She moved forward … the king-cobra-killer flew at her with a venomous fury impossible to describe. As it seized her throat, she caught hold of it, and, with a fury superior to its own, actually tore it in two just as if it had been a sheet of paper … In an instant, it seemed to spout blood and entrails, and was hurled into the well-hole. (*LWW* 268)

Lady Arabella's utter abhorrence for the mongoose is a clear indication of her serpentine nature, and David Seed adds, "As a resident of Diana's Grove she is

associated with the role of the huntress" (200). Stoker thus displays how his central female foe possesses reptilian qualities as well as predatory instincts.

The mongoose is not her only adversary, however. Lady Arabella shows little empathy towards other creatures as well, even turning against her own kind.[18] Adam observes how she frightens snakes at the beginning of the tale when she disembarks from her carriage, even believing that "they seem much more afraid of her than she of them" (*LWW* 175). This brings to mind Darwin's personification of nature as a random feminine force in his 1859 revolutionary work *On the Origin of Species*. In his discussion of natural selection, for example, he writes, "Though Nature grants long periods of time for the work of natural selection, she does not grant an indefinite period … If any one species does not become modified and improved in a corresponding degree with its competitors, it will soon be exterminated" (79).[19] Relating the survival of the fittest to *The Lair of the White Worm*, Lady Arabella's unwillingness to favour even her serpentine cousins illustrates how she will not hesitate to obliterate any being that inhibits her mobility and forward progression. Stoker thus identifies his central antagonist as a wild creature of sorts, and her brutal encounters with various species as well as her wanton display of animal cruelty indicate that, like Mother Nature, she is an erratic and merciless killer.

[18] Lady Arabella's animal cruelty is not unique to *The Lair of the White Worm*; Stoker also explores this phenomenon in several of his short stories as well, most notably in the 1887 tale "The Dualitists; or, the Death Doom of the Double Born" and the 1893 short story "The Squaw." In the former tale, animal abuse acts as a gateway for homicide. In the latter story, the gruesome killing of an animal leads its mother to exact bloody revenge upon her human enemy.

[19] Auerbach notes Darwin's tendency to see nature as a feminine force. She underlines, "Darwin's nature crawls with interrelated life and generates magic metamorphoses … in *The Origin of Species* he consistently personifies his mystic interwoven nature as 'She'" (*Woman and the Demon* 52).

Stoker's nod to evolutionary thought can be felt in other episodes throughout *The Lair of the White Worm* as well, where the author conjures up the figure of the antediluvian worm, and relates it more directly to the similarly evolving New Woman.[20] Consider, for instance, the episode in which Sir Nathaniel provides an elaborate theory as to how a giant primordial worm could potentially develop into a smaller but more threatening creature:

> Now, it is a scientific law that increase implies gain and loss of various kinds; what a thing gains in one direction it may lose in another … May it not be that Mother Nature may deliberately encourage decrease as well as increase—that it may be an axiom that what is gained in concentration is lost in size? Take, for instance, monsters tradition has accepted and localised, such as the Worm of Lambton or that of Spindleston Heugh. If such a one were, by its own process of metabolism, to change much of its bulk for a little intellectual growth, we should at once arrive at a new class of creature—more dangerous, perhaps, than the world has ever had any experience of—a force which can think, which has no soul and no morals, and therefore no acceptance of responsibility. A worm or snake would be a good illustration of this, for it is cold-blooded, and therefore removed from the temptations which often weaken or restrict warm-blooded creatures. If, for instance, the Worm of Lambton—if such ever existed—were guided to its own ends by an organised intelligence capable of expansion, what form of creature could we imagine which would equal it in potentialities of evil? (*LWW* 285)

Sir Nathaniel raises a few issues worthy of further investigation here. First, he specifically identifies the worm as an animal capable of evolving into "a new class of creature," one that—although smaller in stature—could potentially cause more harm than its gargantuan ancestor. Yet the reference to the worm functions as a euphemism for an even more menacing monster: that of the New Woman. Because this feminine type was similarly seen as a creature lacking in morality and whose "organised

[20] In *Dracula*, the Count similarly possesses the ability to assume both human and animal forms, since he "can shapeshift, turning himself into a bat, rats, a dog, a lizard, wolves—he can cross the boundaries of time and of species" (Stott 69).

intelligence" might lead her into unfathomable "potentialities of evil," Sir Nathaniel's elaborate theory may arguably be read as a coded reference to this well-known persona.

Another coded reference worthy of further examination is Sir Nathaniel's mention of two legends relating to the White Worm, namely "the Worm of Lambton or that of Spindleston Heugh," and contemporaneous versions of these tales—"The Lambton Worm" (ed. Edwin Sidney Hartland) and "The Laidly Worm of Spindleston" (ed. Joseph Jacobs) were published in 1890, making them rich fodder for *The Lair of the White Worm* (Hebblethwaite 373). Interestingly, the worm in these two antecedent tales is either born out of human sin or otherwise sympathetically portrayed. In "The Lambton Worm," the evil worm is fished out of a lake by the heir of Lambton, a man said to lead "a profane life" (qtd. in Hebblethwaite 376). Hurled into a well-hole by the heir of Lambton, the serpent begins to terrorise the countryside. Later, the heir is chastised "for having brought this scourge upon his house and neighbourhood" (qtd. in Hebblethwaite 378). The heir of Lambton finally destroys the worm, but not without cursing future generations of Lambton lords. Next, in "The Laidly Worm of Spindleston," a virtuous princess named Margaret[21] is transformed into a gruesome dragon by her evil stepmother. The creature is said to "devour everything it could come across," yet it is not deemed to be at fault; rather "it is hunger that drives her forth to do such deeds," revealing that she is not an inherently malevolent creature (qtd. in Hebblethwaite 374). Her brother Childe Wynd ultimately saves her from her fate with three kisses, and in response to this "the Laidly Worm reared back and before Childe

[21] Interestingly, in this tale the character of Margaret possesses monstrous qualities, just as Stoker's own fictional Margarets do.

Wynd stood his sister Margaret" (qtd. in Hebblethwaite 376). What is clear is that in both tales, the worm seems less demoniacal than its human counterparts. By referencing these legends in *The Lair of the White Worm*, Stoker perhaps hints that Lady Arabella is not as monstrous as the men who hunt her, and that she might—like the serpents of lore before her—be a victim of circumstance rather than a creature intrinsically wicked.[22] Just as so many New Women were unjustly demonised for their violent opposition to the patriarchy, the villainess' own dissident behaviour might similarly be understood as crucial to her evolutionary progression. Like the Lambton and Laidly Worms, Stoker's female antagonist is a creaturely New Woman in survival mode that will trudge forward and will unwittingly, if unwillingly, destroy whoever stands in her path. The author thus employs evolutionary discourse to embark upon a discussion of the emancipated female in his horror tale, with Lady Arabella exemplifying the progressing—and progressive—New Woman. Stoker was certainly not alone in his gesturing towards the New Woman through evolutionary discourse, as Ledger indicates that "an evolutionary-inflected discourse … insinuated itself into writings both for and against the New Woman" (23). Although Stoker initially seems to employ evolutionary thought to undermine the New Woman, certain references, such as the legends of not-so-sinful serpents suggest otherwise. Instead of berating this feminine type, the author reveals that the New Woman's emergence is an inevitable and natural progression, one that he ultimately supports. Lady Arabella's serpent alter ego in *The Lair of the White Worm* in this way represents an organism in the process of

[22] Also noteworthy is the fact that Stoker's 1898 short story "Bengal Roses" features a naïve though virtuous heroine named Arabella Devanti, displaying how the author perhaps envisions Lady Arabella March as a morally nuanced figure in *The Lair of the White Worm*.

transformation, one that acts as a stand-in for the equally evolving figure of the New Woman.

Further along these lines, the author's rendering of Lady Arabella as an ever-evolving creature gestures towards a well-known fixture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century women's movement, a troublesome character dubbed the "Wild Woman." Ledger points out that late nineteenth-century anti-feminist writers such as Eliza Lynn Linton "characterised the 'Wild Woman' (an unmistakable prototype for the New Woman) as a creature who opposed marriage, who vociferously demanded political rights, and who sought 'absolute personal independence coupled with supreme power over men'" (12). Such writers employed this expression as one of many pejorative labels bestowed upon the New Woman, and the adjective "wild" implied that she was more savage than civilised, linking her once again to the animal kingdom. The central antagonist of *The Lair of the White Worm* may certainly be identified as a wild woman of sorts, since she is frequently characterised in creaturely terms. Yet the wild woman Lady Arabella has every reason to be untamed given the oppressive conditions imposed upon her by the patriarchy. In this sense, her ostensible savagery may be viewed more sympathetically, especially since animality may not only be understood as a regressive phenomenon in Stoker's fiction but may also be conceived as a progressive—and by extension more positive—process as well. In short, the New Woman of Stoker's final novel is often represented as a wild creature, one who shares many traits with the demoniacal figure of the serpent. As the female fiend of *The Lair of the White Worm*, Lady Arabella indeed possesses many commonalities with this accursed reptile, both with regards to her sinuous physique as

well as her contemptible comportment. Though initially concealed, her predatory instincts—evidenced by her violent relations with both animals and humans—soon rise to the surface, and her spotless skin is soon shed to reveal a dark and dangerous underbelly. Stoker employs the serpent as a euphemism for the animalesque figure of the New Woman, an individual who for many was a poisonous influence coursing through the veins of post-Edwardian society. Yet even though Stoker initially seems to provide a dark rendering of the emancipated female in his novel, he often peppers his text with clues that he is in fact supportive of many forms of dissident femininity, unlike many of his conservative confrères.

The Mannish Woman

Stoker lastly represents the New Woman in *The Lair of the White Worm* as a masculine individual who disrupts gender categories, and who refuses to comply with socially accepted norms of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century femininity. Ladies who rejected hegemonic rules of conduct were identified as defective creatures, and pejoratively dubbed "mannish women." Ledger describes the mannish woman as one of the multiple and contradictory façades of the New Woman. She underlines, "Whilst moral decadence and sexual license were supposed by some critics to be her hallmarks, elsewhere she figured in discourse as a 'mannish,' asexual biological 'type'" (16). In his final novel, Stoker's Lady Arabella encapsulates this figure of the mannish woman, a powerful dame who refuses to bend to the patriarchy, and who effectively threatens to "penetrate in return." Although Stoker at first seems to lambaste this feminine type, in reality he supported (if not directly, then certainly

indirectly) the New Woman's efforts after all, a fact that he continually hints at throughout his text. The female reprobate's manly qualities are made palpable in several scenes throughout the novel, where Lady Arabella, cast in her role as New Woman, prevails over men and women alike. Her masculinity is perhaps best evidenced by her phallic shape, which she readily displays in her serpentine guise. Towards the end of the novel, the monstrous worm, a not-so-subtle penile creature of herculean proportions, accosts Sir Nathaniel and Adam:

> It was tall and wonderfully thin. The lower part was hidden by the trees which lay between, but they could follow the tall white shaft … As they looked there was a movement: the shaft seemed to bend … the hidden mass at the base of the shaft was composed of vast coils of the great serpent's body, forming a substratum or base from which the upright mass rose. (*LWW* 302)

It is significant than an enormous phallic-shaped beast pursues the two male heroes, displaying its overwhelming superiority over them, and further serves to emasculate them. The primordial serpent—who is in fact a manifestation of Lady Arabella herself—becomes a priapic creature, revealing her visceral masculine powers. Yet Stoker represents female genitalia in even more threatening terms. The worm-hole inside Diana's Grove where Lady Arabella resides, for instance, is repeatedly likened to the ominous folkloric appendage of the *vagina dentata*, recalling the description of the weird sister's dangerous yet alluring mouths in Jonathan's seduction scene in *Dracula*. The seemingly bottomless pit is similarly described as a "gaping aperture" and "a mysterious orifice" (*LWW* 268, 298). Adam becomes nauseated by the reeking smell emanating from this cleft. He likens the stench to "the drainage of war hospitals, of slaughter-houses, the refuse of dissecting rooms … it had something of them all,

with, added, the sourness of chemical waste and the poisonous effluvium of the bilge of a water-logged ship whereon a multitude of rats had been drowned" (*LWW* 267). The worm-hole further resembles the *vagina dentata* in its capacity to emasculate men, thus supporting Ledger's assertion that in addition to being manly, the mannish woman was also an asexual being who blurred gender boundaries. Replete with fangs, this fatal fissure renders impotent all who dare venture inside its inner reaches. Consider the episode of the West African slave Oolanga's brutal murder.[23] When the latter attempts to seduce and blackmail Lady Arabella into becoming his lover, she quickly proves that she will not be ruled by any man. Adam witnesses the gruesome slaughter of the African slave before his very eyes:

> Lady Arabella's anger, now fully awake, was all for Oolanga … she … seized Oolanga, and with a swift rush had drawn him, her white arms encircling him, with her down into the gaping aperture … As the light sank into the noisome depths, there came a shriek which chilled Adam's very blood—a prolonged agony of pain and terror which seemed to have no end … The gloom which surrounded that horrible charnel pit, which seemed to go down to the very bowels of the earth, conveyed from far down the sights and sounds of the nethermost hell. The ghastly fate of the African as he sank down to his terrible doom, his black face growing grey with terror, his white eyeballs, now like veined bloodstone, rolling in the helpless extremity of fear. (*LWW* 268)

Stoker's central antagonist drags Oolanga into her lair only to devour him shortly thereafter. The attack resembles a sort of carnal embrace, with Lady Arabella's arms evocatively "encircling him, down with her into the gaping aperture." True to her serpentine nature, the female reprobate engages in sexual cannibalism with her doomed

[23] Stoker describes Oolanga's face as that of an "unreformed, unsoftened savage, and inherent in it were all the hideous possibilities of a lost, devil-ridden child of the forest and the swamp—the lowest of all created things that could be regarded as in some form ostensibly human" (*LWW* 177). Stoker's racist representation of Oolanga recalls his equally disparaging portrayal of Muslims in *The Lady of the Shroud*, and illustrates that although the author proves capable of progressive thinking in certain areas, he is far from enlightened in others.

mate. Adam observes her shortly after the kill, appearing sated, and remarks that "the only colour to be seen on her … [were] blood-marks on her face and hands and throat" (*LWW* 269). The monstrous man-eater is thus simultaneously presented as culinarily and sexually fulfilled after her bloody meal. Stoker thus establishes his villainess as a *femme fatale* whose various appetites surpass those of her male counterparts, displaying how she effectively becomes the antithesis of idealised femininity.

Lady Arabella's emasculating capabilities call to mind Judith Butler's gendered notion of the female transgressor as a being who "penetrates in return." She contends that if the woman "were to penetrate in return, or penetrate elsewhere, it is unclear whether she could remain a 'she' and whether 'he' could preserve his own differentially established identity" (50). The author further underlines that under such circumstances "the stability of these gendered positions would be called into question" (51). Understood within the context of *The Lair of the White Worm*, Lady Arabella likewise threatens to reclaim the phallus from her male counterparts, menacing the stability of firmly established gender identities. Ledger sees a similar idea at work in Stoker's most famous novel. She posits that "one of *Dracula*'s sub-texts is that the New Woman attenuates the sexual prowess of man, depleting his masculinity, feminising him" (102). Certainly, the same could be said of the emancipated and emasculating female in *The Lair of the White Worm*. Through both her phallic physique as well as the various allusions to her as a man-eating *vagina dentata*, Stoker's villainess becomes representative of the masculinised New Woman, an individual who directly challenged the integrity of male hegemony in the post-Edwardian era.

Stoker's primary female fiend is not only represented as a sexual threat to men in *The Lair of the White Worm*; she also becomes a libidinal hazard to women. Lady Arabella may be read as one possessing a queer sexual persona by virtue of her bizarre interactions with Lilla, most particularly during the psychic battle scene. Together with Edgar, Lady Arabella attempts to place the young woman under her hypnotic power, recalling the séances performed on Lucy and Mina in *Dracula*. Yet the description of the incident in *The Lair of the White Worm*, specifically at the moment when the villainess enters Lilla's home, is also evocative of a sexual encounter between women:

> At length there came an interruption, which seemed like a powerful stimulant. Through the wide window she [Lilla] saw Lady Arabella enter the plain gateway of the farm, and advance towards the hall door. She was clad as usual in tight-fitting white, which accentuated her thin, sinuous figure. The sight did for Lilla what no voluntary effort could. Her eyes flashed, and in an instant she felt as though a new life had suddenly developed within her. Lady Arabella's entry, in her usual unconcerned, haughty, supercilious way, heightened the effect, so that when the two [Edgar and Lady Arabella] stood close to each other battle was joined. (*LWW* 333)

Lady Arabella's hypnotic effect upon Lilla may be understood as a metaphor for same-sex relations, with the former assuming the role of penetrator and the latter positioned as penetrated vessel. The erotic tableau Stoker creates is further replete with a proverbial female orgasm, and is implied at the moment when Lilla's "eyes flashed, and in an instant … a new life had suddenly developed within her." Although Edgar's visual penetration of Lilla may also be read in lascivious terms, only Lady Arabella's admittance into this symbolic ménage à trois has the ability to intensify the elusive effect upon Lilla. This suggests that without the villainess' assistance, Edgar is incapable of satisfying his paramour. Although the encounter kills Lilla in the end, her

passing may be understood as *la petite mort*[24] for which Lady Arabella is solely responsible, again underlining the homoerotic undertones present within the subtext of the tale. Stoker's central antagonist in this way corresponds to the stigmatised figure of the sexually devious New Woman, one who reverses established gender roles even in her interactions with females, and surpasses males in her penetrating prowess. Ledger accordingly observes that the contemptible figure of the lesbian was considered one of the many phases of the New Woman at the end of the long nineteenth century, underlining that "popular contemporary constructions of the New Woman … [reveal how she] was variously figured as a sexually frigid figure of fun, a dangerous *femme fatale* and even, by the close of the century, a lesbian" (135). Although, as Auerbach notes, lesbian women were generally deemed "poisonous outcasts" at the time (*Ellen Terry* 397), Stoker was arguably more tolerant of same-sex relationships than many of his contemporaries. He had both a working and friendly relationship with the openly lesbian suffragist Edith Craig as previously noted,[25] and his own sexuality has been an endless subject of debate within the field of Dracula Studies. With this in mind, Lady Arabella, whom Stoker bestows with priapic powers, can be understood as a more positive character than first meets the eye, even as she sweeps her victims away from the confines of heterosexual relations and draws them into the orb of forbidden same-sex love.

[24] Deborah Lutz underscores, "During the Elizabethan period a slang phrase for orgasm was 'to die,' and it was in the nineteenth century that the French began to call orgasm *la petite mort*—the little death" (42).

[25] Auerbach relates, "In 1899, they [Edith Craig and Christopher St. John] took a flat together; in 1900, Ellen Terry bought her Farm at Smallhythe and gave Edy and Chris the closest and prettiest of the cottages" (*Ellen Terry* 390). One might surmise that if Terry was aware of her daughter's homosexuality, it is likely that Stoker would have known as well.

Given the fact that the mannish woman poses a threat to both males and females in Stoker's *The Lair of the White Worm*, the protagonists naturally see fit to permanently remove their emasculating enemy, since she directly defies the power of the patriarchy. Towards the end of the novel, both Sir Nathaniel and Adam determine to wage war against Lady Arabella, a foe they consider most foul and extremely challenging to defeat. No longer viewing her as fully human, they discuss the possibility of killing her outright, and then abandon this plan because they fear the legal consequences. Sir Nathaniel affirms, "We cannot manifestly take and murder Lady Arabella off-hand. Therefore we shall have to put things in order for the killing, and in such a way that we may not be taxed with a base crime" (*LWW* 290). The 'gentlemen' justify their unabashed misogyny by stressing that Lady Arabella is an anomaly, one who violently disrupts social order, and therefore must be swiftly eliminated. Adam identifies the female fiend with a number of disreputable and animalesque figures, among them the suffragette:

> This one is a woman, with all a woman's wisdom and wit, combined with the heartlessness of a *cocotte* and the want of principle of a suffragette. She has the reserved strength and impregnability of a diplodocus. We may be sure that in the fight that is before us there will be no semblance of fair-play. Also that our unscrupulous opponent will not betray herself! (*LWW* 290)

Alexandra Warwick reads this particular scene as "a generalization about all women, sliding easily from the specific monster to the monstrosity that is 'feminine nature'" (215). Certainly, the likening of Lady Arabella to the infamous figure of the suffragette is one of the rare moments in Stoker's fiction where the author addresses the issue of female emancipation in a direct and explicit way. The suffragette is first confused and

conflated with a number of eclectic figures including the *cocotte*[26] and the diplodocus, once again displaying how she is linked with different and seemingly incongruous figures, not unlike the Edwardian suffragette herself, who was identified as oversexed one moment and undersexed the next. The fact, too, that she possesses the "impregnability of a diplodocus" recalls the earlier noted characterisation of the New Woman as a poor maternal figure "if a mother at all" (qtd. in Ledger 18). The emancipated female indeed stood as the antithesis of the Marion-like matron, and Lady Arabella perfectly fits this characterisation as a childless dame defined by her slim physique rather than her birthing hips. Further along these lines, Adam seems to indicate in the above passage that the suffragette is a long-established enemy of man, even though, as previously discussed, the New Woman was hardly a widespread social menace in mid-Victorian England. One may assume that the passage instead gestures towards the much more threatening suffragettes of the early twentieth century, more radical and militant types who typically "chained themselves to railings, fire-bombed post boxes and went on hunger strikes while imprisoned on civil disobedience charges" (Daley and Nolan 21). This more forceful freedom fighter was generally viewed unsympathetically in Edwardian and post-Edwardian public opinion, at least until after the war.[27] Considering that *The Lair of the White Worm* was published shortly before the Great War in 1911, one may surmise that anti-suffrage sentiment was still

[26] Piya Pal-Lapinski notes that the term "cocotte" used in the context of *The Lair of the White Worm* is synonymous with prostitute or courtesan (80).

[27] Carole Pateman underlines, "Women got the vote, so it is said, because of the impact of the war, or more specifically, as a reward for their work during World War I … [yet] it does not explain why, in Britain, only women over 30 were enfranchised in 1918 when younger women had done most of the war work … A more plausible argument along these lines is that women's determined efforts, which continued during the war, was a major reason why the US, Britain, and also Canada and Nordic countries, enfranchised women before or at the end of the war" (342).

widespread at the time. Stoker identifies Lady Arabella with this more aggressive suffragette, the most threatening incarnation of the New Woman. This reflects the historical reality at the time, as Ledger reiterates that "the combining of women in the Suffragette movement … was to bring the 'Woman Question' to a head in the early twentieth century …" (30). As Ledger underscores, women's suffrage had a major social impact on the advancement of women's rights specifically around the turn of the century. Thus, the anti-suffragist comments in Stoker's novel, which he set in mid-Victorian England, are rather irrelevant and out of place. This was arguably done purposely by the author who, after all, had his novel illustrated by a prominent suffragette artist, and who could only have inserted such hegemonic lingo to expose injustice against women rather than to propagate it. In this way, Stoker's horror tale can often be understood in jest rather than with any real sincerity, especially considering the textual and paratextual elements that undermine the idea that he was against female emancipation. By virtue of her forceful and aggressive nature, the central female fiend thus embodies the figure of the radical suffragette, one of the many incarnations of the New Woman, a figure whose efforts Stoker encouraged rather than dissuaded.

At the closing of *The Lair of the White Worm*, Sir Nathaniel and Adam respond to Lady Arabella in kind, seeing her as a wartime enemy that must be swiftly eliminated. Together, they contend that "being of feminine species, she will probably over-reach herself … we have to protect ourselves and others against feminine nature,

our strong game will be to play our masculine against her feminine" (*LWW* 290).[28] The male protagonists thus see feminine nature as an ambiguous and collective opponent, yet feel confident that patriarchal power will prevail. The two plan an elaborate scheme to fill the villainess' worm-hole with sand in order to "hold the struggling body [of Lady Arabella] in place," and arrange to add dynamite and detonate the accursed aperture with her inside (*LWW* 324). In an act reminiscent of scorched earth policy employed during the Second Boer War,[29] Stoker reveals how his female evildoer and her worm-hole are blown to pieces, and Diana's Grove burnt to the ground:

> At last the explosive power, which was not yet exhausted, evidently reached the main store of dynamite which had been lowered into the worm hole. The result was appalling. The ground for far around quivered and opened in long deep chasms, whose edges shook and fell in, throwing up clouds of sand which fell back and hissed amongst the rising water. The heavily built house shook to its foundations. Great stones were thrown up as from a volcano, some of them, great masses of hard stone, squared and grooved with implements wrought by human hands, breaking up and splitting in mid air as though riven by some infernal power … By now, flames were bursting violently from all over the ruins, so dangerously that Adam caught up his wife in his arms and ran with her from the proximity of the flames. (*LWW* 364-65)[30]

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[28] A similar turn of phrase can be found in Stoker's *The Primrose Path*, where Jerry is presented as mentally stronger than his wife Katey. It is revealed that "the masculine resolution was asserting itself over the feminine, and acting and reacting in itself … constantly in the direction of settled purpose" (34).

[29] Martin Meredith notes that during the Second Boer War (1899-1902), scorched earth policy was a favourite tactic of the British, and was used against Boer civilians. He relates, "Unable to get to grips with Boer commandoes, the British high command adopted increasingly brutal tactics towards the civilian population who supported them. [Frederick] Roberts initiated a policy of collective punishment of civilians living in the vicinity of guerrilla attacks, burning down farms, destroying reservoirs and seizing livestock" (450). Contemporaneous reminiscences of British soldiers described how they destroyed civilian farmhouses: "I went out this morning … we burnt and blew up two farms with gun-cotton, turning out the inhabitants first. It is a bit sickening at first turning out the women and children, but they are such brutes and the former all spies; we don't mind it now. Only those are done which belong to men who are sniping or otherwise behaving badly" (qtd. in Meredith 452). Bearing this in mind, it is plausible that Stoker gestures towards the Second Boer War in *The Lair of the White Worm*, since, as Jimmie E. Cain points out, his works were published within the "geopolitical environment" of the Boer Wars (169).

[30] This passage bears a striking resemblance to the earlier unpublished ending of *Dracula*, where both the Count and his abode dissolve into a pile of dust:

> As we looked there came a terrible convulsion of the earth so that we seemed to rock to and fro and fell to our knees. At the same moment, with a roar which seemed to shake the very

It is through the female antagonist's obliteration that the worm-hole comes alive; Stoker describes how it "quivered," "hissed," and "shook" as if Lady Arabella herself gives one last show of resistance, ever true to her refusal to surrender to the patriarchy. Reminiscent of the staking of Lucy in *Dracula*, the eradication of the worm can likewise be envisioned as a violent sexual encounter, where an unruly feminine force is penetrated by a destructive phallic entity. As with the birth of Quincey Harker at the close of *Dracula*, there is also the suggestion in *The Lair of the White Worm* that the central antagonist lives on, and that her threat has not been fully annihilated. At the close of the novel, Sir Nathaniel relates, "The explosions of last night have blown off the outside of the cliffs. That which we see is the vast bed of china clay through which the Worm originally found its way down to its lair … her ladyship didn't deserve such a funeral—or such a monument" (*LWW* 369). This ending suggests the possibility that, phoenix-like, the mistress of Diana's Grove will rise from the ashes, and that the funeral Sir Nathaniel speaks of will instead become a rebirth into a new life. Lady Arabella's refusal to die is the ultimate form of defiance of an emancipated New Woman, one who resisted masculine supremacy and fought for freedom alongside her

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> heavens, the whole castle and the rock and even the hill on which it stood seemed to rise into the air and scatter in fragments while a mighty cloud of black and yellow smoke volume on volume in rolling grandeur was shot upwards with inconceivable rapidity … From where we stood it seemed as though the one fierce volcano burst had satisfied the need of nature and that the castle and the structure of the hill had sunk again into the void. We were so appalled with the suddenness and the grandeur that we forgot to think of ourselves. (qtd. in Belford 268)

Comparatively, in the published version of *Dracula*, the Count turns to dust after a slash to the throat and a stab to the heart, yet his castle remains intact:

> It was like a miracle; but before our very eyes, and almost in the drawing of a breath, the whole body crumbled into dust and passed from our sight. I shall be glad as long as I live that even in that moment of final dissolution, there was in the face a look of peace, such as I never could have imagined might have rested there. The Castle of Dracula now stood out against the red sky, and every stone of its broken battlements was articulated against the light of the setting sun. (*D* 325)

sisters in arms. The ending of the tale further illustrates a certain progression on the part of the author from his *Dracula* days; he appears more tolerant of female emancipation in *The Lair of the White Worm*, and this greater broad-mindedness becomes especially clear when one considers both the textual and paratextual elements that point towards Stoker's liberalist tendencies. In short, the masculinised New Woman is one of the most recognisable faces of the emancipated female, and this trait can be observed in Stoker's depiction of Lady Arabella in his final novel. The villainess' priapic shape, highlighted by her serpentine qualities, as well as the many allusions to her as a monstrous *vagina dentata*, help portray her as decidedly unfeminine. She displays this virility with males and females alike, luring them into her grip with her hypnotic powers. This is evidenced, for instance, in the female reprobate's carnal embrace of Oolanga as she consumes him, as well as her visual penetration and psychic control over Lilla. She is also equated with the infamous figure of the militant suffragette, which further emphasises her masculine persona. Sir Nathaniel and Adam finally decide that Lady Arabella's manly aggressiveness must be put to an end once and for all. Using contemporary military tactics, the gentlemen seemingly triumph over their deadly foe, yet the ambiguous ending of the novel implies that they have not quite succeeded in purging England of empowered women. The mannish New Woman in *The Lair of the White Worm* thus becomes one of the most recognisable faces of the emancipated female in the post-Edwardian period.

Stoker's *The Lair of the White Worm* represents the author's final vision of unruly femininity, a portrait he develops at length through his engagement with the figure of the New Woman, embodied by none other than the character of the serpentine

Lady Arabella March. Although many passages in *The Lair of the White Worm* may initially be read as misogynistic, several factors suggest otherwise. The rapid evolution of the woman's movement in the final years before the Great War, the incongruous Victorian setting, and the choice of suffragette artist Pamela Colman Smith for the novel's illustrations together indicate that Stoker's purported conservatism is questionable, and in many cases, intentionally ironic. Although the New Woman was a notorious figure for many, Stoker often reveals this feminine type to be both a victim and rebel who is in many ways justified in her fight against masculine supremacy. Drawing from yet at the same time departing from Ledger's understanding of the New Woman as an individual of multiple faces and identities, this chapter reveals how Stoker treats the emancipated female as a force to be reckoned with, one who menaces to topple the delicate balance of power between the sexes. The author's rendering of this freedom fighter is first brought to the fore with an examination of Lady Arabella as a failed angel in the house. The central antagonist discards female domestic ideals in her role as nightmarish wife, one who turns the tables on gender relations and makes men the victims of their matrimonial contracts. Stoker's New Woman is next likened to a savage creature, an animalesque being whose identity wavers between human and serpentine forms. Shedding her skin of conventional femininity, Lady Arabella is envisioned as a venomous presence within society who bears many similarities to the contemporary figure of the "wild woman." The New Woman of Stoker's horror tale is finally depicted as a mannish woman, one who effectively reclaims the phallus from her male counterparts. Alternatively described as a priapic and vaginal monster, the villainess may be seen as an ever-menacing reprobate who threatens to "penetrate in

return." In these ways, the female fiend's quest for freedom parallels the journey of innumerable disorderly dames who similarly defied patriarchal order in post-Edwardian England. Stoker's Lady Arabella in *The Lair of the White Worm* may ultimately be linked to the figure of the New Woman, an individual who rejected traditional gender norms, and who was identified as the most famous of all transgressive personas at the dusk of the long nineteenth century.

Conclusion

> My revenge is just begun! I spread it over centuries, and time is on my side.
>
> —Count Dracula, *Dracula*

Bram Stoker, who died a little over a century ago, could never have anticipated the legacy he was to leave behind.[1] The Anglo-Irish writer—who preferred to stay out of the spotlight and gained little recognition in literary circles during his life—became the father of one of the most familiar Gothic figures of modern times. Stoker's monstrous progeny has certainly eclipsed him, with countless filmic adaptations of *Dracula* appearing over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Yet the author's talent extends beyond his conception of a bloodthirsty aristocrat with hairy palms and bad breath. He also bequeathed to the world an impressive array of literary works that have for generations sent shivers down many a reader's spine. These texts help to better contextualise his famous vampire tale, but also deserve to be acknowledged in their own right.

Daughters of Lilith: Transgressive Femininity in Bram Stoker's Late Gothic Fiction has attempted to contribute new critical perspectives in the study of this remarkable yet little-known author, offering new insights into his classic vampire story, *Dracula*, and bringing *The Jewel of Seven Stars, The Lady of the Shroud*, and *The Lair of the White Worm* to the fore. In these works, Stoker provides compelling portraits of feminine dissidence with his representations of the female hysteric, the dead(ly) mother, the foreign female, and the New Woman. Through their subversive

[1] Stoker died on 20 April 1912. Senf relates that "his obituary in *The Times* described him as 'the master of a particularly lurid and creepy kind of fiction'" (*Bram Stoker* 1).

stances, these daughters of Lilith resist hegemonic structures and reveal the ways in which society was evolving in England at the end of the long nineteenth century. By examining the idea of transgressive femininity across Stoker's horror novels from a gender and feminist approach, one discovers that the author was engaged with several issues surrounding women's rights, and that he often sympathises with—rather than outright demonises—his literary ladies. Often dismissed as yet another conservative writer, Stoker is instead revealed in this dissertation to be much more progressive on the subject of female empowerment and advancement. Indeed, both the inclusion of powerful female characters in his fiction as well as his interactions with feminist and proto-feminists in his personal life attest to his more liberal attitude vis-à-vis the second sex. The instances in which the author displays misogynistic attitudes in his writings, then, are questionable and perhaps even intentionally ironic rather than sincere. Stoker also appears to become more enlightened in his thinking over time, his greater tolerance notably coinciding with the rapid progression of the suffrage movement in England. Through his writings, Stoker was thus not simply attempting to produce goosebump-inducing tales, but was in fact interested in providing profound critical commentaries about the world around him.

The field of Dracula Studies remains a relatively new area of interest among scholars, with Stoker's famous vampire tale continuing to occupy centre stage. Although many recognise him as a master of horror fiction, few are aware that Stoker's literary canon encompasses many different literary genres aside from the Gothic. The author in fact produced some notable non-fiction works, including *The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland* (1879), *A Glimpse of America* (1886), *Personal*

Reminiscences of Henry Irving (1906), and *Famous Imposters* (1910).[2] He also published several lectures, interviews, and essays. In terms of fictional works, Stoker wrote three collections of short stories, including *Under the Sunset* (1881), *Snowbound: The Record of a Theatrical Touring Party* (1908), and *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories* (1914).[3] He also authored a number of uncollected short stories, poems, and journal articles, some of which were uncovered only recently, and published for the first time in John Edgar Browning's *The Forgotten Writings of Bram Stoker* (2012). Last, but certainly not least, Stoker produced several novels aside from the works under study in this dissertation, including *The Primrose Path* (1875), *The Snake's Pass* (1890), *The Watter's Mou'* (1894), *The Shoulder of Shasta* (1895), *Miss Betty* (1898), *The Mystery of the Sea* (1902), *The Man* (1905), and *Lady Athlyne* (1908).[4] Though erudite explorations of *Dracula* have by no means been exhausted, future research could examine some of these overlooked texts. Since women have been the focus of this dissertation and the men in Stoker's life and works have only been briefly acknowledged, an in-depth look at the author's take on Victorian, Edwardian, and post-Edwardian masculinity would make for an interesting study. Stoker's long and at times tumultuous friendship with Henry Irving, for instance, could be dealt with in greater depth, and the question of his closetedness could be explored alongside his fictional representations of masculinity. Such research

[2] A handbook of legal administration; a lengthy lecture; a biography; and a historical treatise on debunking imposters and myths, respectively.

[3] A collection of fairy tales; a collection of stories based on Stoker's reminiscences of theatrical life; and a collection of horror tales, respectively.

[4] *The Primrose Path* is a temperance novel, and the other novels mentioned are romances.

would undoubtedly help widen the scope of Dracula Studies, and ensure that many of Stoker's more obscure works finally "come out of the coffin."[5]

But what would Stoker think of such readings, revolving, as it were, around ideas of gender and sexuality? Given that he believed (or at least publically proclaimed) that sex was the root of all social ills, one might imagine that he would likely have taken issue with interpretations that clashed with his personal convictions, as so many authors do. Although Stoker's opinion should certainly be acknowledged, I believe there is room for multiple understandings of his works. The author himself even admitted to an American correspondent in 1906, "you know a lot more about *Dracula* than I do" (qtd. in Farson 161). One may thus concur that Stoker (or any other author for that matter) does not possess the upper hand when it comes to the interpretational significance of his oeuvre. D.C. Greetham suggests as much, underlining that an author's own understanding of their work must not be put on a pedestal above others:

> An author may claim to have undertaken one sort of work but in fact have produced another, and an author's critical evaluation of that work is not *prima facie* any more reliable or authoritative than any other commentator's. Some authors … are perversely unhelpful about their works, and even some intentionalist textual critics may question and ultimately reject the announced intentions of an author. (364)

This in many ways summarises Stoker's own experience as a writer; although he made it clear that his works were not lascivious in nature, his efforts did not dissuade readers

[5] Charlaine Harris employs this expression in *Dead Until Dark*, the first book of the *Sookie Stackhouse aka Southern Vampire Series*.

from seeing a wooden stake as more than "just a wooden stake."[6] By releasing his texts into the public domain, Stoker relinquished the power he possessed over his literary property. Indeed, it may be said that the act of writing in and of itself "inevitably involves a loss of authorial control, a symbolic death of the author" (Dasenbrock 103). Despite the fact that Stoker attempted to discourage his audience from engaging in provocative readings of his works, his assays to do so were in vain, and his opinion became but one in a sea of critical perspectives.

Ultimately, many interesting parallels exist between the author and his vampiric creation. Like Count Dracula who slips into various personas to suit his every whim, Stoker is a remarkably versatile author who has more to offer than a single tale of the undead. The Count's famous saying: "My revenge is just begun … and time is on my side" is not only compelling within the context of Stoker's most memorable novel, but also rings true for the future of Dracula Studies. While a scholarly appreciation for the author has "just begun," time certainly seems to be "on [his] side." Refusing as ever to die, Stoker will undoubtedly live on, as generations of readers continue to enter into his world "freely and of [their] own will," only to find that they can never leave.

[6] A nod to Elizabeth Miller's assertion that *Dracula* has been oversexualised and that "sometimes a wooden stake is just … a wooden stake" ("Coitus Interruptus: Sex, Bram Stoker, and *Dracula*" (n. pag.).

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