

2009

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Recommended Citation

Parlour, Susan (2009) "Vixens and Virgins in the Nineteenth-Century Anglo-Irish Novel: Representations of the Feminine in Bram Stoker's Dracula," *Journal of Dracula Studies*: Vol. 11 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://research.library.kutztown.edu/dracula-studies/vol11/iss1/3>

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Vixens and Virgins in the Nineteenth-Century Anglo-Irish Novel: Representations of the Feminine in Bram Stoker's Dracula

Cover Page Footnote

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**Vixens and Virgins in the Nineteenth-Century
Anglo-Irish Novel: Representations of the Feminine in Bram Stoker's *Dracula***

Susan Parlour

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Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.

(Malleus Maleficarum, *Part One, Question 6*)

Do you not realise, Eve that it is you?

The curse of God pronounced on your sex weighs still on the world. Guilty you must bear its hardships. You are the devil's gateway, you desecrated the fatal tree, you first betrayed the Law of God, you softened up with your cajoling words the man against whom the devil could not prevail by force. The image of God, Adam, you broke him as if he were a plaything. You deserved death, and it was the son of God who had to die!

(Tertullian)¹

¹ qtd. in Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex* 58.

The wine Eve pressed for mankind poisoned them; the vine that grew in Mary nourishes
and saves the world.
(St. Irenaeus)²

It may come as a surprise to the modern reader that *Dracula*, published in 1897, remains largely neglected by Irish literary critical “heavy-weights” such as Terry Eagleton, Seamus Deane and Declan Kiberd. Given that it is arguably the most enduring, and certainly the most well known of all Irish novels published in the nineteenth century, it should be worthy of more than a passing mention by these critics. Despite the fact that Bram Stoker, born in 1847 in Dublin and drawn from the ranks of the Protestant Ascendancy, shared a similar background with other Irish writers of his time, such as Yeats and Wilde, his omission from many histories of Irish Literature, and even from studies of the Irish Gothic tradition, remains a mystery. Perhaps it was deemed not “Irish” enough in terms of addressing the current issues of its day, but a closer look at both the text and the man arguably testifies against this.

This essay will argue that Stoker’s *Dracula* is more than worthy of inclusion in Ireland’s literary and critical histories. Stoker was well versed in Irish folklore and legends and was acquainted with the published anthologies on folklore penned by Sir William and Lady Wilde (Leatherdale 81). In addition, as Leatherdale suggests, his mother’s intervention in his education, as a result of his childhood illness, ensured that Stoker was nourished and nurtured in tales of Ireland’s past. All of these elements were absorbed by Stoker and integrated into *Dracula*, arguably manifesting themselves most explicitly in his depiction of the feminine. Delivering his maiden speech entitled “Sensationalism in Fiction and Society” as a member of Trinity College’s Philosophical Society served to clarify Stoker’s interest in Irish writing of the supernatural. By focusing on the literary endeavors of a fellow Dubliner, J. S. Le Fanu, Stoker not only qualified his admiration for Le Fanu’s work, but also established a close literary affinity with him. At the same time, Stoker continued to acknowledge the very positive influence exerted on Irish writing by English artists such as Wilkie Collins. His subsequent move to London did little to diminish these early influences and, in fact, served to enhance his work as he absorbed and blended seamlessly the influences and concerns of both English and Irish society to create the novel *Dracula*.

Moreover, *Dracula* continues to divide critics as a result of the novel’s portrayal of the feminine (see Leatherdale 104, 113). Stoker has been variously positioned as either friend or foe of feminism as a subsequence of his perceived ambivalent feelings towards women. I would suggest that it is in the former category that he belongs. Stoker’s portrayal of the feminine in *Dracula* draws on the universal folkloric motif of the vampire figure, whereby the trend in the latter half of the nineteenth century in England demanded that the typical victim of such a creature be “a young, marriageable innocent tremulously poised at the vulnerable turning point between childhood freedom and adult responsibility” (qtd. in Leigh-Rogers 1352A). Stoker, however, manipulates and exploits elements of Ireland’s past and mingles them with England’s contemporary concerns to create a more modern image of femininity than did his peers. Reflecting the English literary mood of his day, where interest in the Gothic was enjoying a resurgence, Stoker is listed alongside “the greatest artists of the age turning their minds to the vampire [...] such as Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Emily and Charlotte Brontë” (Leatherdale 48). In his depiction of Lucy and Mina, Stoker captures the contemporary anxieties of his English audience, whose fear of the “New Woman” figure “was perceived as [...] a threat to masculinity from the 1880s onwards by eroding traditional gender boundaries” (Mulvey-Roberts 78).

Consequently, Stoker’s position within the English literary tradition was firmly secured, but his rendering of the female vampire also succeeds in positioning him very firmly within the Irish “Protestant Gothic”³ tradition and thereby consolidating his affinity with his Irish predecessors. Demonstrating sexual independence (in the case of Lucy) and intellectual independence (in the case of Mina), Stoker’s women not only realize the fears of the New Woman but also are equally reminiscent of the formidable women of

² qtd. in Warner 13.

³ Eagleton identified the Protestant Gothic as a specific genre. See Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and The Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture*, (London: Verso, 1996) 146, for a discussion of this particular and unique genre.

Irish legend, such as Queen Maeve, whose potency and power rejected a patriarchal system on the basis that women are equal, and perhaps superior. These women also seem to represent Irish superstitious beliefs, drawn from a wide array of spiritual and ethereal entities, such as the “dearg-due” (the red bloodsucker) and the “leanaun shee” (the fairy mistress whose eye-catching beauty ensured she was irresistible to men), thereby adding a distinctively Irish flavor to Stoker’s work.⁴ In allowing the young women in the novel to transgress the clearly demarcated boundaries of sexual behavior and to engage with their sexuality in such an overtly explicit way, Stoker succeeds in breaking new ground in literature. Displaying courage as an artist in such a censorious period in history, Stoker, I would argue, manages to create new viable visions of femininity which promote autonomy in both sexual and intellectual matters. The fact that these women are not allowed to survive is not necessarily reflective of the artist’s personal viewpoint but is a result of the rigid and inflexible dictates of society. It is this specific dimension of the novel that has become the springboard for much critical debate; as Jennifer Wicke has observed, “It is not possible to write about *Dracula* without raising the sexual issue” (93). Mary Fitzgerald endorses this viewpoint by stating that it is the “sexual politics of *Dracula* which [is] undoubtedly the source of the text’s neomythical status” (40). This is the central focus of this essay’s argument.

While effortlessly weaving together the traditions of both Irish and English societies in terms of his literary endeavor, Stoker also managed to mirror the social and political mood in Ireland. As is well known and widely documented, the closing years of the nineteenth century found Ireland in the throes of preparation for political autonomy, with the hope of obtaining political freedom from Britain becoming a tangible reality. In an effort to replace one form of patriarchal governance for another, Ireland’s revolutionaries not only sought to supersede any notion of a motherland but, in doing so, strived to superimpose its stamp of authority on the women of Ireland as they urged them to fulfil their roles as wife and mother and subjugate their desires for the “cause.” With the resurgence of the Cult of the Virgin Mary as a direct result of the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception (1854) and Papal Infallibility (1878) and the emphasis on the ubiquitous Cathleen Ni Houlihan, the focus on female purity and chastity ensured that women’s reductive identity was solidified. In deploying the female vampire, Stoker was able to voice the unthinkable to both English and Irish society, as he attempted to liberate the feminine from the fixed demands of the patriarchal machine and articulate in Lacanian terms “the return of the repressed.” Susan Leigh-Rogers explains the particular significance of the female vampire:

This “horror” can be seen as the resurgence of desire (repressed in accordance with the Law of the Father) threatening not only the subject’s insertion into the symbolic order but the entire social structure founded upon that order [...] The female vampire reflects the fear that such strong, independent, sexual women will disrupt the fabric of society. The blurring of boundaries is the very essence of the vampire. Neither live nor dead, the undead confounds dream with “reality,” self with other, love with revulsion. [The female vampire] attacks one or more major institutions that are based on “boundaries,” “exclusion” or limits: the church, marriage, even heterosexuality itself. Only intervention by the representative of the challenged institution can succeed in “divorcing” the victim from the vampire and reasserting the boundaries of these institutions. (1352A)

Standing in opposition, therefore, to all that was held sacred in a patriarchal social climate, Stoker’s Lucy and Mina have to be repressed in order to sustain the “fabric of society.” Bound by the demands of a patriarchal society, Stoker is obliged to curb or expunge these menacing and independent women. Failing to conform to the model of the Virgin Mary, Lucy and Mina possess the power to disrupt and distort the normative social order of the period and, as such, are deemed too threatening to society in the closing years of the nineteenth century. The power of the cult of the Virgin Mary is activated within the novel, despite Stoker’s Protestant background, as a means to curb and control their behavior. In the portrayal of Mina and Lucy, Stoker’s affinity with Catholicism is further emphasized by the fact that we

⁴ Leatherdale 82.

are provided with the two faces of woman, a binary vision with no middle ground: Eve and Mary, Whore and Madonna, Vixen and Virgin. This portrayal is very much reflected in the nineteenth-century Catholic Church's vision where, as Leatherdale notes,

[...] women were either fallen creatures, with treacherous minds and lecherous bodies, a recruiting ground for the devil, or they were saintly, obedient to the commands of men, and exalted for their spiritual and bodily purity. Women, in other words, knew no moderation: they were either sacred beyond belief, or whores from the pits of hell. (141)

The centrality of the distinctly Catholic rituals and paraphernalia within the novel, such as the deployment of the consecrated host and crucifix, further consolidates Stoker's link to the Ireland of his time, which demanded that women conform to the prescribed role of wife and mother. Using the crucifix in the struggle against good and evil in the novel, for example, emphasizes the ways in which evil is exemplified most explicitly in the female characters who deviate from and rail against the rigid imposition of the model of the Virgin Mary. The violence of Lucy's demise, therefore, is arguably in direct relation to the threat she poses to church and state, as she fails to conform to the sexual and social norms of the time. Similarly, Mina's transgressions are also punished, forced as she is to publicly bear the scar of her sexual fall from grace as a form of penance. This ensures that only through her social suffering and humiliation is she redeemed and reconciled to the "father" and can once again be embraced within society as she takes her rightful place within the symbolic order as wife and mother.

We might at first be tempted to view Lucy as the antithesis to the New Woman figure. Described by Leatherdale as "a pampered, upper-middle class child with the silver spoon still showing," she leads a leisured life and displays little inclination to "change the idea of feminine roles in the workplace" (143), one of the traits associated with the emerging New Woman.⁵ But her revelatory letters to Mina make it increasingly clear that Lucy is indeed reflective of a new social order. Collecting marriage proposals from three men, Lucy demonstrates her voracious sexual appetite. Admitting to being a "horrid flirt," she wistfully reflects on her desire to marry all three: "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all the trouble?"⁶ Thus, Lucy "embodies, or symbolises, dangerous subversive desires which disrupt Victorian moral and sexual codes" (Jackson 119) as she attacks and destabilises the institution of marriage and seemingly endorses the merits of polyandry. Consequently, Lucy embraces some of the more radical ideals of the New Woman's challenge to accepted sexual values and, therefore, stands "accused of destabilising society and accelerating moral decay" (Leatherdale 148). But Lucy's sexual candour is equally reminiscent of that displayed in eighteenth-century Gaelic literature, and most notably evident in Brian Merriman's *The Midnight Court*, where the female persona laments her sexual frustration: "Melted by lust [...] for long I've been patient; give me relief!" (35). Succumbing readily to the attractions of all three men therefore renders Lucy susceptible and highly vulnerable to the temptations of the flesh, and her frankness and willingness to discuss her sexual "conquests" reflects a departure from the Victorian etiquette demanded of young ladies, "offend[ing] sexual taboos [and] upsetting the Victorian patriarchs" (Jackson 119). In this way, she comes very quickly to resemble a moral degenerate who must be expunged.

Count Dracula's attack on Lucy renders her increasingly akin to Eve and she is destined to fulfil the fateful words of St. Jerome: "Death came through Eve, but life has come through Mary" (qtd. in Warner 55). Having chosen Arthur Holmwood as her fiancé, she is denied the chance to consummate their relationship. Lucy is the first female victim of the vampire in the novel and she does little to resist Dracula's advances. Instead, she becomes a passive recipient, initially seeming to subscribe to the sexual repression demanded of virgins. But lacking the protection of marriage, her passivity can be seen as

⁵ For a similar reading, see Ashley Craig Lancaster, "Demonizing the Emerging Woman: Misrepresented Morality In *Dracula* and *God's Little Acre*," *Journal of Dracula Studies* 6 (2004): 27-33. Print.

⁶ Bram Stoker, *Dracula* 73, 78. All citations are from the Penguin edition, 1986. Print.

acceptance of moral transgression and sexual waywardness. Her subsequent blood transfusions, given to replenish her failing strength, serve to strengthen this idea. The exchange of bodily fluid during these transfusions prompts Lucy's fiancé, Holmwood, to reflect that as a result of donating his blood to his fiancée, he "made her truly his bride" (73). The implications of Lucy's reception of transfusions from four men, Van Helsing, Quincey Morris, Seward and Holmwood, are all too transparent. Lucy's "purity" and "chastity" have in some way been compromised. This is what reduces Van Helsing to near hysterics as he contemplates Holmwood's belief that "this so sweet maid is a polyandrist" (158).

With Lucy's death, her alignment with "evil" is complete. Liberated from the demands of the living, she represents the return of the Lacanian "repressed" and gradually shakes off all her social and sexual inhibitions, becoming increasingly overt in her sexual appearance. As a direct result of her unholy union with Dracula, her elongated fangs become symbolic of the phallus and, with the power to penetrate and draw blood, she is suddenly sexually empowered. As she becomes the "phallic woman," the novel's gender reversals are complete and her voracious sexual appetite and rejection of the accepted maternal role of women ensure that she challenges and subverts all that is held sacred within the symbolic order. By urging her fiancé to engage with her on a sexual level, she is cast in the role of the sexual aggressor, a role exclusively reserved for the Victorian male:

Her breathing grew stertorous, the mouth opened, and the pale gums, drawn back, made the teeth look longer and sharper than ever. In a sort of sleep-walking, vague, unconscious way she opened her eyes, which were now dull and hard at once, and said in soft voluptuous voice, such as I had never heard from her lips:- "Arthur! Oh, my love, I am so glad you have come! Kiss me!" (194)

As a vampire, Lucy vehemently casts aside the role of the maternal in favor of sexual gratification, evident as she violently thrusts an infant from her breast and urges her fiancé to join her in the consummation of their relationship, a pleasure denied the couple when she was alive:

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 motionless. There was a cold-bloodedness in the act which wrung a groan from Arthur; when she advanced to him with outstretched arms and a wanton smile, he fell back and hid his face in his hands.

She still advanced, however, and with a languorous voluptuous grace, said:-

"Come to me Arthur. Leave those others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come!" (153)

Reported by Seward but observed first hand by Holmwood, Van Helsing and Morris, the subsequent revulsion and horror of the men reflects patriarchal society's attitude towards women who dare to deviate from the fixed roles ascribed to them. Leigh-Rogers asserts that Lucy, as vampire, "usurps the male position, the gaze, the power, the position of God in a religion, the role of sexual aggressor and phallic penetrator." In Lacanian terms, Lucy visibly "disrupts the functioning of the symbolic order in favor of the imaginary" (1352A). Leigh-Rogers further explores the significance, and the danger posed to the social order, by this "dominance of the imaginary" in the female vampire figure:

Sexual relations become permissive and promiscuous with the ascendance of fantasy and enjoyment [...] [t]aboos are broken, sex becomes woman-centred [...] and thus solely pleasure-oriented but therefore threatening to the very existence of the species. The vampire also strips away the mystifications of the symbolic order. Rejecting marriage, in which two symbolically become one, she literally fuses two lives by feeding off her victim. Rather than celebrating the Catholic Eucharist, she demands a literal blood sacrifice. These symbolic institutions and structures have been created for the

purpose of social control, especially over women and sexuality, and the female vampire, excluded from the symbolic order that devolves that control on men, threatens to expose the intention and violence of that order. Only by exercising that very violence on her can the social order be preserved. (1352A)

The violence of Lucy's "second death" is particularly brutal, whilst at the same time rendered overtly sexual. With all four men participating in her death and the weapon of choice being a stake, it is painted as an extreme violation of the female form, reminiscent of a gang-rape as patriarchal order strives to exert its dominance over the feminine's desire to be heard in society. The final blows delivered by Holmwood are recorded with an unrelenting and graphic realism, and the scene has a nightmarish quality to it:

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 mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it. (259)

The symbolism is not lost on the reader. Holmwood, equated with Thor, is elevated to almost mythic heroic status as he unswervingly strives and succeeds in extinguishing the threat to symbolic order. The rhythmic pattern of the language becomes immediately reminiscent of the sexual act, while the reference to the lips and mouth "smeared with crimson" is overtly suggestive of female genitalia, as the female is deflowered in a most brutal way. In the aftermath of such violence, Lucy is seen to no longer be a threat to symbolic or social order and is restored to her benign femininity, becoming "Lucy as we had seen her in life, with her face of unequalled sweetness and purity" (259). While Stoker's creation of the phallic woman, in the form of Lucy, demonstrates his courage as a writer in the portrayal of the overtly sexually desirous female and should offer hope for women in the realization of this ideal, this hope is ultimately extinguished with the effective castration of her body by the male characters who come to represent society as a whole, where women like Lucy cannot be allowed to survive.

Mina, unlike Lucy, is sketched as "the nearest thing to a saint that Stoker can conceive of [and] comes close to the Virgin Mary" (Leatherdale 146) in her representation of the idealized female figure. As a result of her excellent stenographic skills, Mina draws together the multiplicity of voices and textual types, such as diaries, journals, letters and newspaper articles, that come to make up the novel and allow comparisons to be drawn between Stoker's *Dracula* and Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*. In doing so, however, Mina displays a level of intelligence and organizational skill which the male characters significantly lack and, by utilizing new technologies efficiently, Mina serves as the mouthpiece for the emerging New Woman (Leatherdale 148). Her expertise and insight are not lost on the men who admire her intellectual capabilities, but only on the premise that these "masculine" attributes are tempered by a traditional "feminine" side. This is best reflected in Van Helsing's comments: "Ah that wonderful Madam Mina! She has a man's brain—a brain that a man should have were he much gifted—and a woman's heart" (281).

The emphasis in the text remains very much focused on Mina's moral integrity which serves to align her with the Virgin Mary and conversely distances her from Eve. Her sexual reticence and rigid espousal to accepted sexual etiquette is made explicitly clear throughout the text, and serves to solidify this connection. Despite being legally married to Jonathan Harker, their relationship is such that it lacks sexual frisson and seems devoid of passion, reflected at one point in Mina's discomfiture as her husband touches her in public: "Jonathan was holding me by the arm, the way he used to in the old days before I went to school [...] I felt it very improper" (206-7). Mina's perceived subservience to the men in the novel, coupled with her overwhelming capacity for compassion and selflessness, prompt Van Helsing to remark:

She is one of God's women, fashioned by His own hand to show us men and other women that there is a Heaven where we can enter, and that its light can be here on earth [...] so true, so sweet, so noble, so little an egoist. (226)

Using language with biblical resonance, Stoker here stresses in no uncertain terms Mina's alignment with the "good." While the phrase "fashioned by His own hand" may tempt the reader to recall the creation of Eve, the reference to Mina's unique qualities ensures that she is ennobled and elevated to the status of Mary as she absorbs all the characteristics traditionally associated with her. The text is littered with references to her "sweetness." Van Helsing's prayer-like comment, "We are men, and are able to bear; but you must be our star and our hope," is reminiscent of the exclusively Catholic hymn, "Hail Queen of Heaven."⁷ The hymn was penned by the English priest Dr. John Lingard in 1829; the lines "Mother of Christ, star of the sea/Pray for the wanderer/ Pray for me" are repeated in various forms throughout.

Mina's fall from grace, therefore, is far more threatening to a patriarchal social order than are Lucy's similar transgressions. As a solid symbol of goodness, Mina's fall and surrender to the temptations of the flesh emphasize the fact that "good" can fall prey to the powers of "evil." Her saintly status fails to save her from sexual sin, as she embarks on an erotic encounter with Dracula whose attempt "to defile the designated mother of the novel" ensures that the act itself is rendered "doubly evil" (Rosenberg 9). In reporting her transgression, Mina acknowledges the extent to which she has deviated from the path of righteousness:

"And you their best beloved one, are now to me flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin; my bountiful wine-press for a while; and shall be later on my companion and my helper. You shall be avenged in turn; for not one of them will minister to your needs..." With that he pulled open his shirt, and with his long sharp nails opened a vein in his breast. When the blood began to spurt out, he took my hands in one of his, holding them tight, and with the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound, so that I must either suffocate or swallow some of the—Oh, my God, my God! What have I done? What have I done to deserve such a fate, I who have tried to walk in meekness and righteousness all my days? (343)

The description, by virtue of the pointedly biblical language deployed, is both decidedly Catholic but also erotically charged, as the words uttered by Dracula come to almost replicate the Eucharist prayer at the point of Transubstantiation within the Catholic Mass. The reference to blood and wine overtly reinforces this idea. In this way, Dracula is rendered the anti-Christ, and Mina his "companion" and "helper" just as the Virgin Mary served the Lord. The act which ensues is, according to several critics, almost pornographic and deemed deeply transgressive given the nature of the Victorian English audience for whom it was intended and who were "starved of erotic literature" (Leatherdale 167). The positioning of Mina sucking at the vampire Dracula's breast not only serves to blur the gender roles involved but, according to Leatherdale, Stoker is here "bold enough to describe fellatio. Blood, of course, does not 'spurt.' Mina cannot bring herself to name what she has swallowed, but we have already been told it is like 'milk'" (167).

The incident reported by Seward hints at things to come. Mina, having up to this point gathered together with precision and exactitude the various voices of the novel, is from this point onwards effectively silenced as a response to the enormity of her transgression in a male-oriented and repressive society. Her immediate response—"Oh, my God, my God! What have I done?"—not only reflects her growing awareness of the social implications of such an act, but is reminiscent of Jesus' words in the garden of Gethsemane as he ponders his fate at the hands of his all-powerful father which results in his

⁷ The hymn was penned by the English priest Dr. John Lingard in 1829; the lines "Mother of Christ, star of the sea/Pray for the wanderer/ Pray for me" are repeated in various forms throughout.

being cast in the role of innocent sacrifice. Mina too, has to follow Jesus' path and don the robe of sacrificial lamb in order to be readmitted into the patriarchal fold. Branded publicly with the host burned into her forehead, she is depicted as deeply penitent, described as being "in such a depth of despair" (345). While she displays some of the signs of the phallic woman—"her lips were drawn away, showing her teeth somewhat prominently"—her threat to the law of the Father is minimal, as it is reported that "there was no sign of the teeth growing sharper" (351). As he places a consecrated host on her forehead to absolve her of her "sin," Van Helsing uses words borrowed directly from the rituals of Catholicism and reminiscent of the Sacrament of Reconciliation where the contrite sinner is absolved of all wrongdoing and reconciled with the Father: "On your forehead I touch this piece of Sacred Wafer in the name of the Father, the Son, and —." The resultant response described in the following passage not only reflects the gravity of Mina's transgression, where she is effectively branded by the Fathers, but becomes a warning to all women who contemplate breaking the clearly demarcated social and symbolic boundaries imposed by the Law of the Father: "There was a fearful scream which almost froze our hearts to hear. As he placed the Wafer on Mina's forehead, it had seared it – had burned into the flesh as though it had been a piece of white-hot metal" (353).

Van Helsing's warning to her consolidates this notion:

"It may be that you have to bear that mark till God Himself see fit, as He most surely shall on Judgment Day to redress all wrongs of the earth and of His children that He has placed thereon. And oh, Madam Mina, my dear, my dear, may we who love you be there to see, when that red scar, the sign of God's knowledge of what has been, shall pass away and leave your forehead as pure as the heart we know. For so surely as we live, that scar shall pass away when God see right to lift the burden that is hard upon us." (354)

Mina's survival from the vampire attack not only identifies her uniqueness within the text, but is also solely dependent on her already confirmed status within the social order. Unlike Lucy, whose social position was not yet rigidified as a result of her unmarried status, Mina already has a very clearly defined social function to perform as wife to Harker and, as such, is finally "forgiven." Her enduring physical and mental suffering, as a result of her trespass, ensures that catharsis can take place and that she is redeemed within the eyes of the Fathers. Her role within the novel, however, is reduced in line with the serious nature of her transgression and she is increasingly distanced from the men's activities. Mina's desire to accompany the men in their pursuit of Dracula reflects her overwhelming need for the restoration of social order, Dracula's death becoming an essential element in the reinstatement of her "honor." As Rosenberg acknowledges, "The men's quest was to save good Mina from evil Dracula, and, accordingly, to rescue both Victorian woman and Victorian ideology" (13). Based on the idea that "you can't kill Dracula with a Bowie knife," Rosenberg questions: "Is Dracula truly dead? [...] Did Dracula Survive?" (13). Whether or not, however, Dracula's death is achieved in the novel, the journey itself heralds the death knell for the New Woman within the text.

After Dracula's supposed demise, Mina's active role within the tale is rendered redundant. In the final page of the novel we find her firmly fixed and immobilized within the symbolic order, as wife to Jonathan and mother of a boy-child. In line with her new role, she is effectively disempowered and her previous centrality of voice within the text is effectively erased, rendering her mute and silenced and reflecting the Victorian aversion to the New Woman. Fittingly, to reflect Victorian mores, it is the husband who assumes the voice of the family to relay her fate to the readers. As she is readmitted into the patriarchal machine, her son becomes a symbol of her submission to patriarchal society. Linking her to Mary by virtue of her child's gender, the name of her son absorbs all the names of the male figures in the novel, while the male derivative of her own name is excluded, further points to her new-found passivity in the novel: "his bundle of names links all our little band of men together" (449). Van Helsing's remarks, which end the novel, clarify Mina's position as exclusively that of mother, thus expunging any notion of a future threat to the patriarchal world. Venerated and elevated, her very survival is linked to her alignment

with the ideal, passive Virgin Mary, who poses no threat to, and actively endorses, the symbolic order: “This boy will some day know what a brave and gallant woman his mother is. Already he knows her sweetness and loving care; later on he will understand how some men so loved her, that they did dare much for her sake” (449). Thus boundaries are reasserted and the future is secure, as Mina succumbs to her true role. With Lucy securely interred and Mina’s voice expunged, “the world of *Dracula* is marked not by penis envy, but by terror of the vagina” (Fitzgerald 45).

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