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The Role of Female Characters in Bram Stoker's Dracula

Role ženských postav v románu Brama Stokera Drákula

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Anotace

Cílem práce je porovnání rolí ženských hrdinek v románu Brama Stokera Drákula v kontextu obecné problematiky počátků feministického hnutí v průběhu viktoriánské éry. Teoretická část práce se soustředí na sociální situaci a postavení ženy ve společnosti v Anglii 19. století, na význam vzdělání, zaměstnání žen, případně na jejich roli v politickém hnutí a dále na literární stereotypy ženských postav viktoriánského románu. V oblasti literárněvědné analýzy se práce zaměří na porovnání dvou hlavních ženských postav v románu Drákula s ohledem na emancipaci, dovednosti a intelektuální zdatnost hlavní hrdinky v kontrastu se stereotypem nevinnosti a role oběti vedlejší ženské postavy. V neposlední řadě práce v jedné z kapitol zahrne koncept irské literární dekadence a vztah nadřazenosti v souvislosti s tabuizovanou otázkou lidské sexuality na konci 19. století.

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to evaluate the role of female characters in Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* in the context of general initial problems of the feminist movement throughout the Victorian period. The theoretical part focuses on the social situation and the female position in nineteenth-century society in Britain, the significance of education, female occupation, their role in political movements, and the literary stereotypes of female characters in Victorian novels. The practical analytic part focuses on the comparison of the two main female characters from the novel *Dracula* with regard to the emancipation, skills, and the intellectual competence of the main character in contrast to the stereotypical innocence and the role of victim of the supporting female character. Last but not least, the thesis contains a chapter about the Irish literary decadence, the question of human sexuality in the end of the nineteenth century and the taboo connected with that.

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Introduction

"A woman is human.

She is not better, wiser, stronger, more intelligent, more creative, or more responsible than a man. Likewise, she is never less. Equality is given.

A woman is human."

— Vera Nazarian, *The Perpetual Calendar of Inspiration*

Nowadays, Vera Nazarian's quote is not usually perceived as so extravagant, or far-fetched, at least in the majority of the countries. Nevertheless, it was not always like that. The question of equality plays quite a big role in the society, however, so does the inequality. *The Role of Female Characters in Bram Stoker's Dracula* presents an overview of the situation in Britain during the Victorian Era, with the emphasis on the position of women within the society. The aim of the thesis is to describe two main characters from the book published in this period and to understand their different roles. *Dracula* by Bram Stoker is written at the turn of the nineteenth century, when the general public only started to see women as capable human beings, which becomes apparent in the novel.

The practical part of the thesis studies five significant protagonists (four of them females) with the attention to their behaviour and above all, to how others perceive them and how they treat them. Furthermore, it contains text analyses of *Dracula* with the stress on the historical context, the concept of the then society and gender issues. The theoretical part covers chapters concerning the unique epistolary form of narrating, the analysis of the symbolic settings, and the features of Irish decadent movement influencing the Gothic novel style, used by Stoker. As the main topic of the thesis is feminism, the development of the feminist movement is also attached together with the topic of female education.

1 Bram Stoker

The author of the phenomenal work '*Dracula*' was born on 8. November in 1847. He grew up in Dublin with his six siblings. His childhood was quite unfortunate because of his unidentified illness, which made it impossible for him to move. Since he was bedridden for the first seven years of his life, he spend most of that time listening to his mother, who was telling him all kinds of folk, especially Celtic, stories and myths. He admitted much later that most of the inspiration for his vampire story originates from the period of his life. The long lasting sleep and the resurrection from death are the easiest examples.

Not merely his unknown physical state, but also his astonishing recovery took everyone by surprise. After that unpleasant time in bed, he got better, went to school, played sports and became a football star. Because of his mother's support in his early childhood, he grew up loving literature and therefore he chose to study history, literature and mathematics at Trinity College. After school, he became a civil servant and carpenter at Dublin Castle during the day, and in the evening he worked as a journalist and theatre critic. The name of the first newspaper he worked for was Dublin Evening Mail. In 1872, he published a book of his short stories called *The Crystal Cup*. He worked there for approximately ten years before he quit carpeting and started a friendship with Henry Irving. Henry offered him a job in London's Lyceum Theatre.

His first novel is called '*The Primrose Path*', and was published in 1875. It tells a story about a young carpenter from Dublin, who moves to London to seek a better future but ends up becoming an alcoholic and killing his own wife. *Under the Sunset* that is how he named a short story collection published in 1882. Soon after (1890) he wrote his second novel, '*The Snake's Pass*'. His other novels are '*Miss Betty*' (1898), '*The Mystery of the Sea*' (1902), '*The Jewel of Seven Stars*' (1904) and '*The Lair of the White Worm*' (1911), but none reached the popularity of *Dracula*.

Bram Stoker died in 1912 after some years of suffering from poor health, stroke and maybe syphilis.

2 The Gothic Novel

People seem to have found a weird pleasure in fear. The feeling they get when they are afraid or scared, brings some kind of joy or at least excitement to the humankind and it always did. Precisely, people like to read or watch scary things, but not to experience them. Terror, fright, mystery, the supernatural, madness, insanity, lunacy and other curses, all of those have been from time to time the topics of fiction. Even in the period of oral literature, horror stories were told. First attempts of the novel of terror date back to English Romanticism. Romanticism and gothic novels do have some similarities. Both genres share the psychological aspects in the stories - inside struggle of characters, mental problems, etc.¹ The gothic novel occurs as a forerunner of the modern horror stories. It is above all typical for England; nevertheless we can still spot gothic stories in other nationalities. This horror/romance genre remains popular in the modern day; since it contains features of both horror and romance nicely blend together, although the attitude of the readers has slightly changed.

The principle of the gothic novels is based on black and white characters. There is no place for neutrality. Heroes and antiheroes interact with one-another, experience terror and often also fall in love. The whole romance seems rather naive; on the other hand that is exactly what gives a little bit of a wit to the story. Horace Walpole, 4th Earl of Orford and famous historian, antiquarian and politician, is often considered the founder of the Gothic Novel. He wrote the first gothic novel and named it *'The Castle of Otranto'*. The combination of medievalism and terror was very shocking back then. *"Terror is the author's principal engine and serves to grip and affect the reader."* (HUME, 1969) Walpole created a story with a certain style that gave the shape to modern-day gothic movies, books, music and other forms of gothic culture. The story of the Castle of Otranto takes place in Italy within one special gothic castle with several secret corridors and dungeons. Throughout the story quite a lot of people die and some get married and it all happens because of the horrifying prophecy which says *"that the castle and lordship of Otranto should pass from the present*

¹ D. HUME, Robert a Robert L. PLATZNER. Gothic versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel. *PMLA*. 1971, , 266-274.

family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it".(WALPOLE, 1764)

Not only the tyranny, cruelty, mystery and love affairs but also the psychological aspects have been attracting the readers' attention since 1764. Many authors then followed Walpole's example and wrote outstanding gothic horror novels. 'Frankenstein' by Mary Shelley, 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens, 'Dracula' by Bram Stoker and many others were made popular by the general public.

Talking about gothic novels, Robert D. Hume divided this genre into two sections – terror-gothic and horror-gothic. In his point of view, horror and terror are two completely different terms with distinctive meanings. "*Terror-Gothic plays on the reader's response to suspense, while horror-Gothic attempts to involve him with the villain-hero protagonist. Both types share an interest in the characters' psychology, and both kinds may be regarded as statements or correlatives of the author's state of mind.*" (HUME, 1971) As Hume also points out, the hero or mostly anti-hero is not usually the leading aspect of the story. The key factor is typically the atmosphere, place or the mood setting.²

As previously mentioned, it all originated in England, however a couple of years later France came up with the *roman noir*³. The German writer Friedrich Schiller was also inspired by the current flow and often used the style of the *Schauerroman*⁴. The real peak of this genre took place in the Victorian Era. It was reckoned as the top writing style at that time. Naturally, some changes took place. Especially the settings experienced a certain shift. Old gothic castles and ruins were slowly replaced by more familiar environment.

„ In Gothic writing the reader is held in suspense with the characters, and increasingly there is an effort to shock, alarm, and otherwise rouse him. Inducing a powerful emotional response in the reader (rather than a moral or intellectual one) was the prime object of these novelists. “ (HUME, 1969) Some writers used supernaturalism to create the horrifying atmosphere, the others explained the inexplicable with science.

² HUME, Robert D. and Robert L. PLATZNER. "Gothic versus Romantic": A Rejoinder. *PMLA*. 1971, 266-274.

³ black novel in translation

⁴ shudder novel in translation

Leven M. Dawson studied gothic novel from a bit different point of view. He was not interested in the topics, but rather the paradox of the novels. People should be frightened in horror situations, instead, they often feel sexually tense instead. "The Gothic writers assert not only that terror is strangely involved in love but that eroticism is an attribute of terror itself. " (DAWSON, 1968) Women ought to be innocent but in gothic novel, they take the lead. He found the enjoyment of fear paradoxical, too. Dawson explained that it is the controversial way of writing that makes the story so full of paradox.⁵ Writers were not afraid to put down what had never been written before.

3 The Irish Decadence

Gothic novel was not the only popular literary style at the turn of the century. As the society was going through some changes, all kinds of art were influenced by that shift as well. In France, where basically everything important began, also a decadence movement started to grow. Pessimism and nihilism, the key terms of decadent, mirrored the needs of society to break out of the rules. Suddenly, literature did not concern a story, but the way of narration, the mesmerizing mood and last but not least it proclaimed sensuality.

Literature of decadence annulled most of the rules that were applied till then. The authors were disgusted by the society and mainly by their moral, political and economic decadence. That is why morbidity became dominant in their works. The aim of the authors was to shock people. Therefore, they were writing in a way that had never been written before and they did not care what the society thought of that. They despised the public opinion. The traditional values were not recognised by decadent authors. Immorality and perversity were often being treated as standard way of living.⁶

One of the most popular Irish decadent pieces of work is called *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. The story of a narcissistic young man, who falls in love with his own reflection, got rejected by the majority at that time and not only because

⁵ DAWSON, Leven M. Melmoth the Wanderer: Paradox and the Gothic Novel. *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 1968, , 621-632.

⁶ VLAŠÍN a kol. Slovník literárních směrů a skupin. Praha: Panorama, 1983, s. 49-52

of the homosexual topic. Nowadays it stands for one of the most frequently read decadent books, which influenced many others. The superficiality of the nobility and their values were criticized by Wilde with Freud's theory of manipulation - the manipulation, which the society is guilty of, according to Oscar Wilde.

As it is already mentioned, Wilde and Stoker knew each other and there is no doubt that *Dracula* was inspired by Wilde's decadent writing. The whole Transylvanian area shows no systematic organisation at all. People there live absolutely without any rules and are surrounded by unrealistic creatures. The loss of identity that the decadent period was experiencing, is expressed in Stoker's novel by the sexually confused protagonists. Eroticism with the connection to vampirism suggests the loose moral boundaries. Moreover, everything seems depressive and the transgression between disillusionment and reality resembles more of a spiral than a straight line.⁷

4 The Narrative Form of *Dracula*

The form of this gothic novel is very iconic. It is essentially the most important feature in the whole book. It is called epistolary form and it consists of letters, journal entries, newspaper clippings, telegrams, doctor's notes, ship's logs and occasionally newspaper reports. The Greek word "*Epistle*" originally means a letter and it gave the name to the method of containing more than one narrator in a story. As we can see the story from several points of view, we are also able to spot motives and reasons of the main protagonists to act the way they do. It strengthens the philosophy and intertextuality of the text. Major source of information for us are brought by detailed diaries, which they write for the comfort of something known. David Seed notes in his work, "*In common with Seward and Mina, Harker decides to record events in as much detail as possible in the anxious hope the circumstantiality can counter strangeness. Keeping his journal thus becomes a therapeutic act of self-preservation, apparently all the more secure from Dracula's scrutiny because it is written in shorthand.*" (SEEDS, 1985) But not only are they trying to keep their own sanity with the diaries, they are writing them as the investigation material. Later in the novel they start to share their

⁷ SUKDOLOVÁ, Alice. The Gothic, Romantic and Victorian Tradition with Respect to the Poetics of the Sublime: The Space of Transylvania and Victorian London in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. *Eger Journal of English Studies*. 2016, 45-59.

notes, so everyone knows all the facts and can possibly try to fully understand the situation. *“Until the third section of the novel, only the reader has access to all the journals and letters, and he is therefore in a position more favourable to making these recognitions,”* (SEEDS, 1985)

The only character that does not show us his point of view is Dracula himself. Apart from that, Van Helsing, Quincey Morris, Dr John Seward, Mina, Jonathan and Lucy, they at least write some diary entries. *“Stoker’s principle of narration is that only Dracula’s opponents are granted narrative voices and they can only record what in each case they have plausibly experienced.”*(SEEDS,1985)

Miss Mina then collects all of their diaries or newspaper evidences and puts them in the chronological order, so it is easier for others to understand the whole problem. When we are reading a book like this, we can with no difficulty empathize with protagonists, because we know exactly what they have learnt, experienced, and what they have gone through. Each of them, whose writing we can read in the book, has slightly different style. Miss Mina’s writings are quite emotional whereas Doctor Van Helsing writes more scientifically. The story of Dracula is made as a puzzle, formed of small puzzle pieces that have been put together.

5 The Setting

As Jonathan travels from London to Transylvania, he describes the means of transport, train stations and people. He is very curious and he compares everything to Britain. The first line in Bram Stoker’s book is essentially a complaint about how late trains are in the Eastern Europe. One of the notes in his diary says: *“It seems to me that the further East you go the more unpunctual are the trains. What ought they to be in China?”* (STOKER, 1897) Because it is more than hundred years after the industrial revolution, Britain is quite developed and they are very proud of their achievements. Mina claims she knows trains schedules by heart, because she has thought it might be useful for them. Another modern convenience that is often mentioned in the novel is telegram. This gadget is mostly used by the doctors (Doctor Van Helsing and Doctor Seward), as they are both appreciated men and can afford such a thing. Bram Stoker seemed to be very keen to show the level of advancement of his country, because the

Transylvania part of the story takes place in very underdeveloped small town. Dracula's castle is described as a very old building in ruins with many tall towers and quite medieval appearance. People in Bukovina, which is the name of a village near the Count's castle, are rather uneducated superstitious country bumpkins.

Throughout the whole story, people appear to travel a lot. Again, it can be taken as a reminder of how developed the transport system was. Jonathan travels from London to Transylvania, Mina and Lucy to Whitby, then Mina to Bucharest to help Jonathan and to get him back to London. All of them travel to Count's castle. Last but not least Doctor Van Helsing, who is working as a professor in Amsterdam, is traveling a lot between Amsterdam, London and Whitby.

6 Essential Themes in Dracula

6.1 Symbolism and Sexuality

Vampirism and sexuality are two terms that are usually very closely connected.

As soon as Lucy and Mina are both infected by vampirism, their representations are sexualized. They behave more eagerly and passionately, which was almost forbidden at that time. At the times of their sanity and consciousness, their fragile sides are exposed. Dracula was written during a period of change. Some people still believed in a conservative way of life, but there were some, quite a few actually, who had a vision for a different and dynamic, rather scary future for women.

As previously mentioned, no one publically spoke about sexuality. It was judged as an unnecessary topic. The idea existed that sexual lust is *"the drive that most firmly binds man to the animal level....Rational ascetic, alertness, self-control and methodical planning of life are threatened the most by the peculiar irrationality of the sexual act which is ultimately and uniquely unsusceptible to rational organization.... The more rationalized the rest of society becomes, the more eroticized sexuality becomes."* (WEBER, 1968) Even though both Mina and Lucy differ in this matter, there is still some kind of nobility or purity that they have in common. They behave as if sexual lust does not exist.

There are many interpretations of Bram Stoker's story and its sexual aspect. Some people are inclined to Freud's description of the matter, the others are not. But almost everyone agrees that the book is full of eroticism and hidden sexuality. John Allen Stevenson does not think there is a Freudian theory behind Dracula's actions. In the 'A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality' he says, *"Although the old Count has women of his own, he is exclusively interested in the women who belong to someone else. This reconsideration can yield a fresh appreciation of the appeal of Stoker's story and can suggest ways in which the novel embodies a quite powerful imagining of the nature of cultural and racial difference."* (STEVENSON, 1988) According to Stevenson, the issue in *Dracula* is not the perception of the figures as family members; it is more about the excitement of unknown and different.⁸ Mina even states in her diary that Dracula threatens and terrifies her because of his foreign character. Not only has his eastern nationality interested her, but also his vampirism awoke her curiosity. The fact that he does not live as a human but as a vampire seems repulsing, nevertheless she feels tempted. Stevenson explains it as, *"The familiar is the image of the good, while foreignness merges with monstrosity."* (STEVENSON, 1988)

Novelty is the key word for the Count himself. He makes so much effort to move out of his country, just because he feels that Transylvania is too boring, too mundane for him after all these years. He wishes to taste the difference.

Talia Schaffer, continues with the theme of novelty and sees the whole story as a proof of Stoker's homosexual relationship with Oscar Wilde. *"Dracula's victims constantly negotiate between hiding or revealing their condition. Dracula seems to be structured by the anguishing choice between repressed helplessness and dangerous action, and it is the unconsciousness of the whole problem that gives the novel its mythic status."* (SHAFFER, 1994) She gives suddenly a totally different meaning to the whole mood of the story. Where most of us saw hints of mystery and secrecy, she finds thoughts of indecisiveness on the matter, whether to come out of the closet or not.

⁸ STEVENSON, John Allen. Journal Article A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of Dracula. PMLA. 1988, , 139-149.

6.2 Gender Issue

As this horror novel was written and published in the end of the 19 century, we can still find angelic purity features from Victorian era in this story, but also a bit of feminist hints. When we talk about Miss Lucy, her whole life can be summed up as a prototype of conservativeness and innocence. She literally cannot wait to get married, so she could be a perfect housewife with children and a husband to take care of. That is exactly how it should be according to the society at that time. On the other hand her friend Mina, who also gets married in the middle of the story, is not afraid to be a bit independent. She actually helps a lot to solve the case of how Lucy becomes a victim of Dracula and one of his minions, and indeed to trap Dracula. That is what was called “New women” trend, which came along with the new century. Women started to be more active in terms of politics, economy and social matters.

Bram Stoker is considered to be the one who was not able to imagine women other than fragile, innocent little humans without any form of power. In his novel, he did not even employ many female characters. His only proper female characters, who were mentioned more than once, were Miss Mina Murray (later Harker), Lucy Westenra and the Three Sisters. Lucy’s portrait in the book is very straight forward one. She is the symbol of Victorian beauty and innocence. Naivety and superficiality play a big part in her character. Accordingly, people treat her like someone, who cannot handle any difficult tasks, only the easy child-like ones. On the contrary, Mina is quite independent, smart and resourceful. She does not wait for the others to save her. She is not afraid to act and put her fate in her own hands.

Whereas all the main male characters are portrayed with characteristics, heroic bravery and intellect demeanour. Critics have been a bit worried about the fact that Stoker created only strong male character, because he was convinced that women would not have had such powers or capacity to deal with troubles. He could not visualize women defending themselves or others. Consequently he is sometimes labelled as a sexist. Actually he made victims of both main female characters.

6.3 The Sublime

From one point of view, *Dracula* is full of hints that prove technical development of British Empire. On the other hand, the story is also filled with supernatural elements, inexplicable events, and symbolism. Stoker, alongside the other writers from the end of the century, was not immune to the influence of the sublime effect. He was a very rational man and could not imagine the world functioning without any logical structures or patterns. That is why all the characters from his novel consider themselves lunatics when facing the supernatural. One part of the story even takes place in a mental asylum. However, the long passages describing weather, area, mood and collective mind-set evoke strong feelings. The reader suddenly perceives the story differently. Even though the story line does not change, the impression one gets, while reading a book with sublime features, shifts a little. It is hard to define strict lines, which bound the logical and the illogical, because of the subjectivity that is involved. The transgression between those two worlds reflects also the moral boundaries that are slowly being torn down with every realisation that the world we all live in is not an innocent place.

The symbolism of Dracula's quick and quite unnoticed transfer from mystical place he calls home to very developed area of splendour and nobility, reminds me of the idea of transgression. Both are uncertain and undefined. We know very little about his journey, but as he is coming closer to Whitby, the whole sublime effect occurs and becomes significant in the plot development. *"Then without warning the tempest broke. With a rapidity which, at the time, seemed incredible, and even afterwards is impossible to realize, the whole aspect of nature at once became convulsed. The waves rose in growing fury, each over-topping its fellow, till in a very few minutes the lately glassy sea was like a roaring and devouring monster."* (STOKER, 1879) Sublime nature is expressing the feelings with the powerful and raging waves. Almightyness of nature, mystery and fear of the unknown brings the reader's sense of the supernatural but also the sense of life, as the Gothic sublime concept of stillness usually means death. Borderless space of the sea and the freedom of movement contrasts with the terror of the unknown. Dracula's ship entering Whitby harbour comes as a complete surprise to

the rationality of the city. Moreover the fact that he is coming to spread his contagion. Ironically enough, he is colonizing the colonial empire.⁹

People in Whitby stick to the rules, they do not experiment, they follow the laws. Dracula represents freedom in the sense of no rules and certainly no guilty conscience. Uncontrolled sexuality is also connected to him. While the repressed sexual identity conserved in Britain is suddenly disrupted by Dracula's approach, the look at human nature changes to some extent. The power of womanhood, embodied by Mina's willingness to survive and to fight, causes a new attitude towards the dependence or rather independence of women. Even though the presence of a monster wakes the sense of purpose in some women, it also takes a part of an identity from others. After being bitten by the Vampire, Lucy does not act according to her best convictions. She is manipulated by her creator, the Count Dracula himself.

Stoker put fuel in the fire when creating the scary, unknown place Transylvania, as Victorians had already feared the East. Britain was considered as the nice place with logical structure and system. The place, already colonised by developed population, suddenly being occupied by supernatural creatures driven by their primitive needs, is another irony Bram Stoker put in his work.

Life and death, innocence and guilt, reality and illusion – Stoker's novel is packed with opposites with no strict definitions. Dr. Van Helsing is the one who often crosses the boundaries. He is not afraid to kill, but only with the purpose of saving others. He uses hypnosis to switch over between Mina's consciousness and unconsciousness. Supernaturalism and mystery is his profession. At university in Amsterdam, where he teaches those subjects, he is respected for his psychoanalytic knowledge. Although he is an expert, the vampire hunter, what he is experiencing with the others, is quite new and scary for him, although the sublimity of that is more visible in others. He uses science to win over the irrational.

Another example of transgression are the wolves. They represent pure nature, but they are also under Dracula's control. *"The presence of wolves whose hostile howls and Otherness become associated with their subordination to the Count's rule forms another source of dramatic tension as well as the Gothic horror atmosphere of the*

⁹ ARATA, Stephen D. The Occidental Tourist: "Dracula" and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization. *Victorian Studies*. 1990, 621-645.

woods. The wolves accompany the process of Dracula's transgression and, interestingly enough, their presence in space forms an essential part of the sublime Gothic both in Transylvania and England. The wolves represent sublime nature accompanied by fear as they remain parts of the unconsciousness."¹⁰

7 The Position of Women throughout the Ages

At the hunting-collecting times, when people led the nomadic way of life, the position of women was not as minor as we might have thought it was. Experts assume that actually women were given bigger importance than their male counterparts. They were the ones who were raising the descendants, taking care of the fire, building homes and last but not least collecting seeds. Men's tasks were limited to hunting and providing a reproduction material. This position that women got was also caused by the fact that, they were bringing seeds and plants every day, but it took several weeks before men returned with an animal. Thanks to women the Neolithic revolutions arose, as they were quite educated in terms of plants and seeds kinds. Women fundamentally invented agriculture. Matriarchy was a real thing back then. Juristic and religion powers were entrusted to the 'foremother'. Mothers were worshipped and honoured. The greatest sin anyone could possibly make was to kill one.

With the gradual development of handcrafting, fishing, army and trade the role of men shifted. Their skills were much appreciated and considered useful. The leading position in society and power was required by the rich and from matriarchy became step-by-step patriarchy.

Moving to the ancient times, patriarchy completely took over and suddenly everyone pretended that it had never been any different. The worst treatment of all was directed at women in Athens. Not only it was forbidden for them to walk out of the house unaccompanied, there were also separated rooms in the house for them. After their fathers selected their husbands, their loyalty moved to their spouses. Their purpose was to give birth to a male heir, which bounded them even more to the

¹⁰ SUKDOLOVÁ, Alice. The Gothic, Romantic and Victorian Tradition with Respect to the Poetics of the Sublime: The Space of Transylvania and Victorian London in Bram Stoker's Dracula. *Eger Journal of English Studies*. 2016, 45-59.

household. If a woman wanted to leave her house, she had to be fully covered with clothes. Surprisingly, this idea persists till now in many Islamic countries. The education for women in ancient Greece was somewhat rare. The lack of education also caused a big decrease in their social status.

The social situation in Sparta looked a bit different. The state held the possession of all girls and boys from the age of seven. That means that even women received an education. Not only were they educated, they had even the same syllabuses as men.

Marriage and physical love were judged as a necessity in the Middle Age. Christianity was quickly spreading over the Europe and with that movement the impression of women being sinners appeared. Even though the perception of women's rights did not changed much from ancient times, as their rights still belonged to their husbands, they were not discriminated socially. Then the establishing of convents became popular along with the social role of women as superiors. For some women, joining the convent was just a decision they made in order not to be forced to marry somebody they did not want to. The religious path also provided education and it meant a possibility of a more powerful position in society. Abbesses were honoured. Women who stayed at home and got married were usually helping their husbands with business matters. Toward the end of the Middle Age, the importance of women rose. Nevertheless when people got married, it was the husband who took control of everything, but they both shared some rights in their marriage. For servant, maids, peasants and slaves stood that they had to ask their master for permissions if they wanted to get married. It was illegal to not ask. Especially female peasant had restrictions. Their lords had the right to tell them what to do, how to behave, etc.

Throughout the shift from the Middle Age to the modern history, the female role in society was shifting but the process was very slow. At first it was mainly the church responsible for lifting women from their low positions. With the establishment of many convents, schools, hospitals, they gave women work and most importantly place for development. The stereotype that working women are not capable of having a family at the same time as a proper job was set into the subconscious of most of the population. Women were working as governesses, doctors, teachers, but they were living alone without a husband. A real turn to this belief came when the First World

War broke. Men were sent to war and women were doing their jobs instead and raising kids and taking care of the household. But first attempts to change the poor conditions women usually had, happened at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of nineteenth century, because of Industrialization. The movement of the Enlightenment also helped, as their main principle said that all people are equal and that they all should be educated. But not everyone agreed - some people and it was a majority, accepted Rousseau's ideas and believed that women should be submissive to male's authority, yet, feminism survived. In fact, the feminist movement started to grow. In 1882, women got the right to own a property and their own earnings and to be educated in the same level as men.

*"Richard Steele defined women with the words such as mother, daughter, sister, or spouse."*¹¹ In his point of view, women do not exist on their own terms; there is always someone, who marks who they are. First of all, that person is their father, then brother, thereafter husband and last but not least son. When we talk about women's position in society, we have to also talk about men's position, because it is actually a man whose role has determined a woman's role for quite a long time. (LENDEROVÁ, 1999) Female emancipation got the real meaning in the twentieth century. The feminist philosophy that appeared at that time was not new, but the way people perceived this issue was. Technology made this change inevitable. As I have already mentioned, war also contributed to that, because society understood that everything that only men had done before, could suddenly be completed by women. The year 1919 brought a huge shift forward, as Nancy Astor got elected as the first female MP. The right to vote at the age of 21 for all women in Britain was established in 1928. Only a year later another massively successful women proved that women can hold posts of leaders. In 1929 Margaret Bondfield became the first female cabinet minister. She fought for women's rights, cofounded the *'Women's Labour League'* and became a chair of the *'Adult Suffrage Society'*. Her goal was not to have the same right as man; she wished to extend all rights to all people regardless gender, property, or social status. Suffragettes and feminist ideas were filling the world. Throughout the sixties, American feminists had a very loud voice. It was a huge scandal, when they protested

¹¹LENDEROVÁ, Milena. *K hřichu i k modlitbě*. Karolinum, 1999.

during Miss America competition and compared themselves to cattle, as women in that competition were being looked at. They even started the bra burning movement, which spread over the world. Women were burning their underwear as a symbol of oppression alongside a lack of freedom. The idea behind it represented women being able to free themselves. Following this moment, the real changes happened. Female writers started to be published again and women began to wear trousers, etc. In 1975 the *'Sex Discrimination Act'* came into effect and in 1979 Margaret Thatcher became the first female Prime Minister.

How the situation looks nowadays is quite clear to everyone. Women have more rights than they ever even dreamt of, but are still not equal. Men earn approximately one fifth more in comparison to women while doing the exact same job.

7.1 Women in the Victorian Era

The right to vote, to make allegations against somebody, or to own a property, those were just few activities, which only men were authorized to pursue. *"Women were still largely excluded from circles of power, authority and prestige."* (VICIUS, 1972) *"They should suffer and be still,"* was usually advised to them.¹² Women at that time were not only forbidden to stand out of a crowd, but they were also expected to be happy. Female from upper class backgrounds were obliged to remain chaste and pure. The innocent look was much admired. *"After all, in popular understanding 'Victorian' has long served as a general synonym for oppressive domesticity and repressive prudery."* (VICKERY, 1993)

Working was considered a dirty action not allowable for girls, even though it would give them the independence they needed. Their only pursuit of life was to get married, give birth, and take care of their husbands, children, and households. Even the fashion from that time was adapted to this type of thinking. Huge crinoline robes and skirts did not allow them to really do anything. The representation of the whole family was usually their burden. The roles of women were confined to organising parties, meeting new neighbours, keeping good social relations, and in some cases, educating their children.

¹² VICINUS, Martha. *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age*. Indiana University Press, 1972.

Those women, who had to work because of their lower social status, were considered to behave inappropriately. The society looked at them as if they were neglecting their real familial duties. Socially acceptable professions were thought to be nurses, house-keepers, midwives, governesses, or teachers. Women belonging to lower classes were usually working as cooks, dressmakers, servants, or worst-case scenario, in factories or as prostitutes.

Over all, women belonged to the domestic sphere in the 19th century. The conventions said that they were required to provide their husbands a clean house, food, raised children, and sexual intercourse. The limitations of their rights even spread to losing ownership of their money, properties, and estates after marriage. It was caused by the fact that after a woman got married, her own rights were given to her husband. The same happened with her properties and social status. They became possessions of their husbands. Amanda Vickery summarises that, *“According to the received wisdom, Victorian ladies cared for nothing but homes and families, their education was 'decorative adornment' and they submitted to fathers and husbands.”* (VICKERY, 1993) Divorces were social taboo, so there was not really a way out for women. Even if it was possible, they would not have done that, because it would have been humiliating to remain alone.

The trend of “pater family” had been set and only a few forward thinking women who we would now described as “feminists” wanted to change that. A man was always the head of a family and the leader.

Amanda Vickery claims in her article that those sceptics, who do not believe women are strong enough, should really look into the past. She says, *“Most (sceptics) are now at pains to present women as sentient, capable beings rather than as passive victims, emphasizing the ways in which women shaped their own lives within a male-dominated culture.”* (VICKERY, 1993)

Despite this, Amanda believes that women in nineteenth century were not always oppressed and at home. She stays behind the idea that that is how poets saw the female society that is how they wanted them to be. There is a difference between that and how women actually lived. In her essay, she quotes, *„nineteenth-century women were not always the passive, submissive and pure creatures of popular*

idealizations ... neither were they completely free from this stereotype." (VICKERY, 1993)

7.2 Female Education in 19th century

The importance of female education is finally being taken more seriously at the turn of the century. Although the society is still under the traditional influence, we can spot some improvement. Primary and secondary female schools are being established and women are slowly starting to be accepted to universities. Surely there is a difference between high class society girls and the working class ones. The upper class girls are being taught things which are meant to help them to fulfil their social conventions. The education remains mostly mediated by governesses or private teachers. Nevertheless, the purpose stays mainly focused on showing them and making them understand where they belong. They are taught to accept without any doubts that their position in the society is strictly set and they cannot do anything about it. The same attitude as the rest of the community have is required. They are taught not to deviate from the norm. All of those preparations are supposed to help them become lovely companions. From their early age, women hear constant reminders, of how important is to retain family traditions. Parents do not wish them to be taught anything more challenging than that. This was because the prevalent attitude was that highly educated and emancipated females were unattractive. According to one belief, it can seriously damage woman's reproduction, if she is too smart. Because of that reason they forbid their daughters to study at the reformed schools, which are appearing in the end of the nineteenth century. They prefer to hire a teacher, who can practise drawing, singing, and dancing with their children, or they send their daughters to boarding schools, where they can interact with other girls from the same social class. Girls in this era simply have reconciled with the fact that they will never have the same education as their male peers.

The same ideology is being applied to the middle class society as well. Girls are mostly being taught at home. Although the aim of their learning is to adopt the knowledge of taking care of a man's needs, they are being tutored by governesses or instructors. Sometimes girls are also expected to help by cleaning, cooking, and other

housework, in contrast to boys. Puberty presents the time, when girls are more and more aware of the inequality between themselves and boys. Annie Rogers for example, got an acceptance letter from the Worcester College, but as soon as they found out, she is a girl; they cancelled the acceptance in favour of a less clever boy.¹³ That was surely not an exceptional case. There were hundreds of hardworking, strong-minded, goal-oriented girls who cried for education. The possibility to study at private or state institutes is being given only to their brothers and they feel jealous in response. They are conscious of the fact that their parents invest money into their brothers but not in them. The dutiful daughterhood ideology is being very popular. Most parents worship the idea that having one's own hobbies or interests is being considered selfish. John Ruskin voiced his opinion on that matter in his book, where he wrote that female education should "*take into consideration a husband's need to share his interest with his wife and conduct intelligent conversation with her.*"¹⁴ According to him, the only reason why women should be educated is that they need some background knowledge so they can easily have conversations with their spouses. (VINES, 1991)

First two female colleges in London were founded in 1840s. Although *Queen's College* was run by men, the provided education was aimed to women. The second one was called *Bedford College* and it was established and run by women. But it took couple of years than the syllabus for women and men were at least similar.

As the time went by, more and more educational institutes for women came into existence. In 1871, two suffragettes - Maria Grey and Emily Sherriff formed the Women's Education Union as a movement that was to bring publicity to the matter of female education. They desired to raise the standards of schooling and teaching and also to improve the status of female teachers. As the decision whether or not to send a daughter to college was also a financial issue, they founded a trust, which provided most of the funds. School supported by their trust did not divide girls into classes according to their age, but their academic ability.

¹³ *The Victorian Woman and Education* [online].

¹⁴ VINES, Alice G. Reviewed Work: *Victorian Feminism, 1850-1900* by Philippa Levine. *The American Historical Review*. 1991, 874.

But after all not only sex, but also the social status played a big role in education. Girls from lower classes were usually trained at home by their mothers or housemaids. Adoption of family ideals was the goal of their efforts.

7.3 Suffragettes

The reason for women not being allowed to vote let alone become a candidate for Parliament was simple. It was believed that women did not need these privileges, because they had men, who decided and voted on their behalf. Men would take all the responsibilities in political matters. Because of the poverty that was extremely widespread at that time, more and more women were forced to work, usually in awfully filthy industrial factories for very little money, but it gave them the opportunity for talking. They spent a large amount of their time in a group of women with the same (or at least similar) problems and that is where the first steps for the feminist movement happened. They got the opportunity to discuss political matters freely, without their husbands. At the end of the nineteenth century, first attempts for a reform were held - however not very successfully. Their main goal was to get the right to vote, which at that time seemed like an extreme demand. The group of women, who were not satisfied with the way they were treated, soon formed a radical movement called Suffragettes.

First it all started in France; nevertheless soon enough even Britain was flooded with protesting women, demanding their rights. We cannot really talk about equality, because that was way too far from what they have ever dreamt of. They just wished to have a voice that would be heard and not suppressed. After John Stuart Mill proposed an amendment that would have given a vote for women and it was rejected, the whole Suffragette movement increased. They spread their campaign around the whole country. However, there was not one view on what should happen and that was also the moment, when the whole group split into two parts. The first one called Suffragettes was the radical one, which organised hunger strikes, protests parades, and blockades of traffic. The women, who did not want to cause such a disturbance, called themselves Suffragists. Basically, they were just members or followers of the

Suffragette movement. The leader of this campaign was Emmeline Parkhurst, who adhered the Russian methods of protesting.

Lots of people were influenced by Russia. Not only Suffragettes got the inspiration from them, but also artists and variety of intellectuals were looking up to Russian culture. (GRANT, 2011) Parkhurst was the one who made the decision to make their campaign more militant. For a while the whole issue was quite violent, the angry females were destroying properties and protesting on the streets with the consequences of them being imprisoned and then some went on hunger strike and were force-fed. Wallace Dunlop started a real movement, when she, as the first one, began her hunger strike. She influenced Irish and Indians, but soon after similarly other nationalities followed her example. Even though British hunger strikes were not the original ones, we know much more about their development than we do about the Russian ones. Revolutions and strikes in Russia and Siberia took place under the tsarist regime, which did not support discussing such topics openly in public. (GRANT, 2011) Wallace Dunlop was taken to prison because of the sign she made on the wall of St. Stephen's Hall in the Palace of Westminster. The text read: "*It is the right of the subject to petition the King, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal.*"¹⁵

The situation in Russia appeared unbelievable. '*Siberia and the Exile System*' is a two volume-book written by George Kennan, an American explorer and revolutionary, containing archival information such as personal interviews, data, drawings, etc. showing the cruel truth about Russian government. After Kennan published the book, he was expelled from Russia. Russian revolutionaries often travelled to Britain to express their opinion. Suffragettes copying Russian methods of protesting slowly drew attention to the situation in Russia and they basically caused the cancellation of Anglo-Russian alliance. (GRANT, 2011)

After publicly criticizing the methods seen in Russia, Britain had to admit that they also had issues that had to be dealt with accordingly. Hunger strikes and forced feeding started to be more and more common.

¹⁵ GRANT, Kevin. British Suffragettes and the Russian Method of Hunger Strike. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 2011, 113-143.

That all was interrupted by war in year 1914. Luckily in 1918 there was an improvement and those women over 30 who owned a certain amount of property, got the right to vote.

8 Text Analysis

The story begins with Jonathan Harker, young solicitor and a fiancé of Mina Harker. He has been sent to Transylvania by his supervisor and a very close friend with the task to meet Count Dracula at his castle and to negotiate with him a purchase of a London mansion. Jonathan cannot believe how lucky he is that his boss has so much confidence in him and is very interested in the Transylvanian culture. In his diary he notes down everything he is experiencing on his way to the Count's castle. He describes places which he visits, people he sees or meets, and cuisine he tastes.

A bit of uneasiness crosses his mind, as he comes closer to the Carpathian Mountains, for local inhabitants pray for him and try to convince him not to continue in his journey. The supernatural and sublime effect of the space is growing as Jonathan enters Transylvania.

"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?" (STOKER, 1897)

Even though they are all very hospitable and nice, their sense of highly superstitious nature concerns him. When he is leaving his last accommodation, the landlady even puts a rosary around his neck claiming it is for his mother's sake. During his departure one of the passenger, who travels with him, says "Denn die Toteen Reiten Schnell."¹⁶

Throughout the first part of the book, which is mostly formed of Jonathan's diaries, there are not many other strong characters except Jonathan. As it is already mentioned, Stoker believed women had a stable position, which was far away from anything dangerous or exciting. He meets some locals, talks to them and then describes them in his diary. *"The strangest figures we saw were the Slovaks, who were more barbarian than the rest, with their big cow-boy hats, great baggy dirty-white*

¹⁶ For the Death travel fast

trousers, white linen shirts, and enormous heavy leather belts, nearly a foot wide, all studded over with brass nails. They wore high boots, with their trousers tucked into them, and had long black hair and heavy black moustaches." (STOKER, 1897) Stoker's confidence of Britain's leading place in the technical development is clear from the beginning. He describes eastern nationalities as primitive tribes with no logical structure or system. Not even their appearance impresses him.

However, we have the impression that Mina is known as early as the story begins, even though she does not appear at the beginning, and that is because Jonathan keeps writing mental notes to his diary, when he does not want to forget to tell her about something. *"I had for dinner, or rather supper, a chicken done up some way with red pepper, which was very good but thirsty. (Mem. get recipe for Mina.)"* (STOKER, 1897) It is his way of showing how much he loves her. He is eager to share every memory with her. As he is traveling through Europe, he describes everything he sees almost as if he is writing a travelogue. *"I shall enter here some of my notes, as they may refresh my memory when I talk over my travels with Mina."* They also write letters to each other. All of that is found very useful later in the story.

The first meeting of Jonathan and the Count is very formal and we can say a bit awkward. Jonathan notices Dracula's stiffness, cold and enormous strength, and is also surprised by the Count's knowledge of London's history and geography and mostly by his excellent English. The Count gives him a free access to his library and a massive dinner, but he does not eat with him. *"I am all in a sea of wonders. I doubt, I fear, I think strange things which I do not dare confess to my own soul. God keep me, if only for the sake of those dear to me."* (STOKER, 1897) That is, what he has written to his diary after the first meeting with the Count. He feels ill at ease. The fear that all of sudden occupies his mind does not seem rational. They sit together almost every night and talk about everything what is somehow connected to London and Londoners. As days go by, Jonathan gets the impression that he is not actually a guest in the castle. He is trapped there and none other than the Count himself can set him free. It is getting clear that Dracula is using his supernatural manipulative powers to control everything- men, animals and possibly even weather.

"Doors, doors, doors everywhere, and all locked and bolted. In no place save from the windows in the castle walls is there an available exit. The castle is a veritable

prison, and I am a prisoner! I feel the dread of this horrible place overpowering me. I am in fear, in awful fear, and there is no escape for me. I am encompassed about with terrors that I dare not think of.” (STOKER, 1897)

Also, he notices that there are no servants and gets the suspicion that even the coach driver, who had driven him to the castle, was actually Count Dracula. Step by step he discovers some weird facts about his host. He sees him crawling on the castle’s wall like a spider, for example. Dracula’s ability to metamorphose into different kinds of animals is revealed later. One day, whilst he is wandering around the castle, he finds Dracula sleeping in a coffin. That terrifies him a lot. It is not just the Count, but there is also something strange about the place. The further Jonathan goes in exploring the castle, the more trapped he feels. *“The gothic architecture, lofty halls, secret passages, great round arches, tall windows, broken battlement etc.,”*¹⁷ all of these are exactly the features that contribute to the gloomy atmosphere that Jonathan is so afraid of.

After some moments of panicking when he overcomes his fear, Jonathan decides to disobey Dracula’s order and falls asleep in the library. Following the decadence style, he does not act rational. There he meets the Sisters, three female vampires, who desire for his blood. The relatively short scene, where the Three Sisters are contemplating his murder, is considered as the very sexually tense one. The Three Sisters lick their lips while talking about Jonathan and his body. Their animal-like behaviour is very expressive and filled with sexual lust. Jonathan’s uncertainty and confusion, whether he dreams or is conscious, reaches the top. Thanks to the Count himself, Jonathan escapes unscathed, but since that moment, he is sure of his host’s true nature and wishes to go home. At one point, he confronts Dracula and asks him to allow him to leave. The Count gives him the permission to go home, but because there are wild wolves everywhere around the castle, Jonathan has no other choice but to stay inside. Wolves represent here something very normal and close to nature, but also something dreadful and unreal being under the Count’s control. Later on in the story, the reader realizes Dracula is the leader of wolves, as he has the skills of werewolves and is able to turn himself into one. *“I was to be given to the wolves, and*

¹⁷ SUKDOLOVÁ, Alice. The Gothic, Romantic and Victorian Tradition with Respect to the Poetics of the Sublime: The Space of Transylvania and Victorian London in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. *Eger Journal of English Studies*. 2016, 45-59.

at my own instigation. There was a diabolical wickedness in the idea great enough for the Count, and as the last chance I cried out, 'Shut the door! I shall wait till morning.'" (STOKER, 1897)

How or when Jonathan escapes we do not know. The main thing is, he manages that and spends a few weeks in hospital in Bucharest, where he obviously calls for Mina. This section is quite romantic. He is not very sane in this moment, nevertheless because they say: "in sickness and in health", Mina and Jonathan get married, despite the fact no one knows, if he will get better.

Meanwhile in London a huge drama is happening. Sweet Lucy Westenra, who has just accepted a marriage proposal from Arthur, gets ill. Sickness is what people believe it is, but the truth says she has been bitten by a vampire. As has been explained, Lucy is the best friend of Mina. Her beauty is known and praised far and wide. She is the typical Victorian Woman. In comparison with Mina, Lucy's only interest is to get married, give birth and manage a household. Thanks to her purity and a golden heart, everyone tries to help her. However, because of the way she interacts with others and the way she lives her life, the status of an innocent, pure and incapable young lady is attached to her. Besides her soon to be husband, also two other men, who have proposed to her earlier, and Doctor Van Helsing, they all try to solve the mystery. Doctor Van Helsing is a very important figure. Whereas most are there because they know Miss Lucy personally, he comes because of the professional reasons. He is well known as a doctor, who has solved many more than strange cases. Indeed, he also feels sympathies with this young lady soon as they meet. He came on request from Dr. Seward, who was to keep an eye on her and who decided that there is something seriously wrong with her. That is why he sent for his old friend and asked him for help. He also sent a letter to Arthur, Lucy's fiancé.

"I am in doubt, and so have done the best thing I know of. I have written to my old friend and master, Professor Van Helsing, of Amsterdam, who knows as much about obscure diseases as anyone in the world. I have asked him to come over, and as you told me that all things were to be at your charge, I have mentioned to him who you are and your relations to Miss Westenra. This, my dear fellow, is in obedience to your wishes, for I am only too proud and happy to do anything I can for her." (STOKER, 1897)

Mina has known from the beginning that her friend suffers from sleepwalking. She has even helped her more than once. She has found her and walked her home when she got lost, because Mina, on the contrary to Lucy, is capable of handling things herself. But by the time it got worse, Mina travels to Bucharest to take care of her fiancé. Lucy's fiancé Arthur needs to go off too, since he has been sent for due to the fact that his father is dying, so poor Miss Lucy is left alone with this horrible problem. Not completely alone. There are still many people who try to solve the case and who look after her. Doctor Van Helsing is the first one who suggests that it might be a vampiric problem. He does what is in his power to prevent the change. He puts garlic flowers around her room and even around her neck, arranges blood donations and night watches. Thanks to his deep knowledge and long praxes, he knows what to do.

Despite the amount of people taking care of poor Lucy, she eventually dies. Actually, Arthur sets her body free, after she becomes a vampire, by killing her. Once they find her dead lying in her bed with two scars on her neck, they organise a funeral. Nevertheless, soon they realise that "sweet Lucy" did not die, but has turned into a vampire and is now kidnapping children and sucking their blood. The group creates a plan. Doctor Van Helsing leads the investigation and the capture. Despite the fact that they all grieve, they agree on an immediate action, in order to save some children's lives. Van Helsing's knowledge spares poor grieving Arthur's life, when vampire Lucy attempts to trick him into a kiss - the kiss that would mean either dying or turning into a vampire.

At Lucy's funeral, Doctor Van Helsing asks Mina for help. Although she is devastated by her best friend's death, Mina knows where the priorities lie and so she collects all their diaries and starts working. They form something what we would now call "an emergency committee" and try to find Count Dracula, who has bitten their beloved Lucy. Their cooperation works amazingly well as long as they do not think about the Victorian stereotypes. According to Victorian conventions, it was not appropriate for a lady to be involved in important matters. Granted her safety and peace, they all decide to leave out Mina from their business. The situation seems to be very stressful and dangerous; however Mina is a strong woman with bright intellect, who does not wish to be left behind. This decision shows later on as an almost fatal one. Dracula finds Mina alone and unarmed, hence he has a perfect opportunity to

bite her. He feeds her his own blood in order to control her. Luckily Mina does not transform into a full vampire.

Meanwhile the men keep searching for fifty boxes full of earth, which they believe Dracula has brought from Transylvania to London. They are Count's only safe places, where he can spend daylight hours. Basically, Dracula needs some place from "the other world", so he could survive in the new one. Immediately as they find one, they purify the ground with a wild rose and therefore prevent Dracula from being able to rest there. Besides the fact that they are destroying one by one his own hidings, Dracula starts to feel haunted, thus he flees the country. The whole group plus Mina follows him to his homeland Transylvania and try to make a trap for him. Thanks to Van Helsing's ability to hypnotise, they keep track on what he is doing and where he is situated. Every morning before sunrise Van Helsing hypnotises Mina and asks her questions about the Counts actions and position. Mina, being very brave, helpfully let him use her as a navigation.

In the end, Van Helsing arrives to the castle with Mina, killing the Three Sisters and then together with others, who are following the Count on horses, a boat and in a carriage, trap Dracula. Thanks to a heroic act of Quincy Morris, the Count is killed and Mina is saved.

9 Characters

9.1 Dracula

The main character but also someone we do not know much about is Dracula. Presumably, he comes from an aristocratic family, because he calls himself the Count of Transylvania. His most significant characteristic is his vampirism. The fact that he is a vampire influences every aspect of his eternal life and most of his actions. David Punter says, "*The vampire in English culture, in Polydor, in Bram Stoker and elsewhere, is a fundamentally anti-bourgeois figure. He is elegant, well dressed, a master of seduction, a cynic, a person exempt from prevailing socio-moral codes.*"(THOMSON, 1983)

Gold, together with a huge castle are in his possession and he certainly cause fear. His reputation is beyond scary. He does not appear in many chapters from the book, but his actions are always subtly visible. People either talk about him or are too scared to talk about him. Some people, especially the locals from Bukowina, pray they never meet him, others hunt him down. He is always the main topic, or rather the biggest problem.

Dracula is an undead who wishes to move from his homeland Transylvania to metropolitan London. The reasons why he wants to do that are debatable. Most likely it is the fact that there are more people whose blood he can suck, in comparison to eastern countries such as his native Transylvania, drives him towards this idea. Since he has decided that drawing no attention at all is essential, he has been studying English language, British manners, geography, history, economy and basically everything what has something to do with British culture. That is also why he asks for Jonathan to come and complete his purchase in Transylvania. He has no intentions of killing him or at least till he gets some information. Killing Jonathan is not his main goal. He just wishes to meet a British in reality before he continues with his plan.

Count is described as an old tall man, with long white moustache, very pale looking and always dressed in black. Massive eyebrows and sharp, extremely white teeth that is his signature look, although his image changes slightly after his moving to the island. Jonathan describes his appearance in his diary,

“There lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half-renewed, for the white hair and moustache were changed to dark iron-grey; the cheeks were fuller, and the white skin seemed ruby red underneath; the mouth was redder than ever, for on the lips were gouts of fresh blood, which trickled from the corners of the mouth and ran over the chin and neck. Even the deep, burning eyes seemed set amongst swollen flesh, for the lids and pouches underneath were bloated. It seemed as if the whole awful creature were simply gorged with blood.” (STOKER, 1897)

An enormous strength that Dracula has comes as a surprise for others. Jonathan first notices it, when the Count-dressed like as a servant- helps him down from the carriage. He wrote to his diary, *“His hand actually seemed like a steel vice that could have crushed mine if he had chosen.”* Then he continues to the castle and meets Dracula-without the coverage this time. *“The strength of the handshake was so*

much akin to that which I had noticed in the driver, whose face I had not seen, that for a moment I doubted if it were not the same person to whom I was speaking. So to make sure, I said interrogatively, 'Count Dracula?' " (STOKER, 1897)

When creating Dracula's character, Bram Stoker got the inspiration from Vlad Tepes the Impaler, who was the prince of Wallachia during the 15th century. Vlad was a terrible man and a cruel savage ruler. He would impale, boil, or let his victims be eaten alive by animals. He also used to cut off his victims' limbs or other body parts. He enjoyed watching people suffer; it was his kind of fun. However, it is not clear whether he drank their blood or if it was just a myth that people created later.

9.2 Mina

Mina is one of the main characters of the story and also the only one who has some sort of connection to everyone else in the book. She is not a prototype of an ideal Victorian woman. Even though there are different stages of her personality throughout the book, we can see her loyalty and intelligence all the time. At the beginning she is just Miss Mina Murray, a school mistress, engaged to Jonathan Harker and the best friend of Lucy Westenra. She is all so enthusiastic about her fiancé, sending him letters, practising her shorthand writing, so she can help him with work when he comes home. Then concerns and uneasiness come, because of the lack of his responses. Even when she gets some answers, she can tell they are not sincere or true. She worries for her soon-to-be husband's safety and she does not like the distance. On the other hand she sees the opportunity for him and accepts the fact that travelling belongs to Jonathan's work responsibilities. Jonathan knows he can always rely on her support and faith.

When she gets the information that he is suffering at the hospital far away from her, there is no time to hesitate - she jumps on the train and sets herself on the journey. Her love does not have boundaries, because even though she finds her lover at the bottom and in total insanity, she marries him. At the beginning, I had the impression that she does not really have her own pursuit of life. Everything she does, she does to please the man she loves, her family or even the general public. Her only

goal is to be a perfect housewife. You can understand this in the context of the Victorian era.

Women at that time could not have their own interests; they were obliged to serve the men. But as the story goes on, Mina kind of takes the lead and she really is a big help. She is the one who puts the pieces of the mysterious puzzle together. No one treats her as she would be an object. They respect and admire her. Although she is the only woman on “the emergency team,” she does not show her weakness, fear or despair for the reason that she does not want to bring any more worries on either one of the men. She is quite independent. She does not need anyone (man to be precise) to tell her what to do. After she joins Van Helsing and the other in the mission, she collects all the materials and diaries that they have, rewrite them, order them in chronological order and gives each of the men their own copy, so everyone knows what they are dealing with. She is very focused and determined to win the battle. The loss of her best friend does not stop her; she knows her priorities and keeps working. After the inconvenience of being bitten by the Count himself, her role changes slightly. But still she is not completely worthless. During the time of the Count’s control of her and unconsciousness, her rationality speaks and with the help of Van Helsing’s hypnosis she tracks the enemy.

9.3 Lucy Westenra

She is the ideal Victorian young lady. Get married, have children and a household- those are her desires and wishes. She has been raised in a very patriarchal family and to replicate that is also her goal that she hopes to achieve. Even before she was announced to the society, her reputation as a beautiful and perspective girl had been known. Everyone admires her sweet nature, purity and her angelic face. She considers Mina as her best friend. They spend quite a time together and when they do not have a chance to talk, they write letters. Mina is for Lucy very important. She tells her everything, even the secrets that she does not tell her mother. So it is only natural that it is Mina, who learns the happy news about Lucy’s engagement as the first one. In the letter that she sends to her friend, she also explains how it has happened and how she was proposed three times that day. Her enthusiasm and joy are visible from

the way she writes her letter. Maybe we can speak of a vanity here, too, because she is not only pleased from the number of admirers, but also wishes she could marry them all.

After she chooses her fiancé, the only problem that bothers her, is her increasing habit of sleepwalking. She travels from London, where she lives together with her mother, to Whitby to get some fresh air and to clear her thoughts. Mina accepts her invitation and follows her there. She kindly takes care of Lucy but starts to get worried.

“At first she did not respond, but gradually she became more and more uneasy in her sleep, moaning and sighing occasionally. At last, as time was passing fast, and for many other reasons, I wished to get her home at once, I shook her forcibly, till finally she opened her eyes and awoke. She did not seem surprised to see me, as; of course, she did not realize all at once where she was.”(STOKER, 1897)

After Lucy’s sleepwalking problem is made apparent, she even develops anaemia. Her fiancé, who is very worried about her health condition, calls for help from Doctor Van Helsing. He soon finds out that she has been bitten by Dracula and is now turning into a vampire. He and the others try to save her, but thanks to her newly developed appetite, they are forced to kill her. The reason, why they had to proceed to such a drastic step is that she has died, turned into a vampire and been secretly kidnapping new-born babies and drinking their blood.

Interestingly, immediately following her change, she becomes impudent, sexy and confidently behaving person. Seductress is what she has become. Poor Arthur, her former fiancé, struggles a lot, in order not to meet her requests of a kiss. In this case, it would be the mortal – vampire kiss. Only thanks to well-timed intervention of Doctor Van Helsing he resists and let the others pull him back. Not only has he not got tricked by the girl he loves, but also he finds the strength to set her soul free. Arthur stabs Lucy in heart with a wooden stake and then Doctor Van Helsing cuts off her head and stuffs her body with garlic. He claims that is the only way Count Dracula cannot take any possessions of her.

9.4 The Three Sisters

Stoker's conviction in the idea of "the correct behaviour" of women led to him putting features of "New Women" to the negative characters. He created Three Sisters as a symbol of rebellion. They are outcasts of the society; they do not care about people's opinion or needs. Their lust, passion and animal instinct is what drives them towards actions. They radiate sexual energy. Jonathan described their looks but also the way they made him feel.

"There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips." (STOKER, 1897)

Mentioning their behaviour, Jonathan often compared them to creatures more than humans. The way they moved, the way they talked, everything they do was somehow extraordinary. According to his opinion, their laugh resembled silvery music. "It was like the intolerable, tingling sweetness of water glasses when played on by a cunning hand." (STOKER, 1897)

After they checked him out and progressed to feed on him, their behaviour more than ever reflected animal instincts. They licked their lips, smelled the blood, their posture changed completely. Even though they might seem as independent evil vampires, the Count kept a tight rein on them. He got very angry, when he saw them leaning over sleeping Jonathan and made pretty clear, that they disobeyed his ban and that he was not going to tolerate such behaviour. Soon is reviled, that the three sisters feed mostly on human babies, which causes a long unconsciousness for Jonathan. He feels so overwhelmed by the truth; he thinks he cannot cope with that. The image of the full bag of babies makes him sick. Even though their manners repulsed him, he felt magically drawn to them.

Despite all the symbolism, they do not, however, play a big part in the book. They appear there just for a while, but their actual importance in the whole story is much bigger. They are sometimes called Dracula's brides. Their sexuality is what they use for haunting their pray. They express their lust whenever they want to and that is not usual in Victorian era. It was mostly a male privilege to want and ask for sex or any other human contact. It was surprising how actively these three sisters acted. That is exactly what Bram Stoker did not want to see in women - disobedience, stubbornness

and eagerness. He portrayed them as animals that lick their lips when talking about prey. When Jonathan meets them, he feels fear but sexual desire at the same time. He wants to kiss them, but knows it is very dangerous to do so. He describes this meeting as both thrilling and repulsive.

We do know neither the origin of the three sisters nor their role in Dracula's life. Even the relation between them and Dracula stays unclear. Some Freud oriented interpreters see them as his daughters. They find the interaction between them as an incest metaphor. The three of them always stick together; nevertheless there is obvious superiority of the blond one. Maybe it is because the other two are dark, so she stands out; maybe it is because of the past. We cannot say. One of the others even encourages the blonde one to feed on Jonathan. She says, *"Go on! You are first, and we shall follow. Yours is the right to begin."* (STOKER, 1897)

Other theory says the three sisters represent Dracula's lovers. Even though he is mad and does not agree with their behaviour, he cares about them. After his outrage because of their attack on Jonathan, he promises them that they can have him later, when he is done with him. The three sisters might be Count's former victims. Both Lucy and Mina were supposed to end up like them, too. The conversation between the Count the three sisters suggests that they share a romantic past. When they accused him of never loving anyone, his mood suddenly changed as he was drowning in his memories saying, *"Yes, I too can love. You yourselves can tell it from the past. Is it not so?"* (STOKER, 1897)

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to analyse two main characters in Bram Stoker's Gothic novel *Dracula* and to distinguish the differences between the typical Victorian woman and the *New woman*. Women's life at the end of the nineteenth century was not always easy due to many stereotypes presenting them as innocent and incapable humans, not worthy of any interesting tasks. There was a huge gap between their role and the role of men in the society. Proper education was usually provided only to their male counterparts, because of gender oppression and due to the general opinion that females belong to the kitchen, etc. Mina, representing the new woman, works and fights alongside their male companions. She is educated and has the skill of shorthand writing. On the other hand, Lucy - representing the traditional Victorian values, allows others to help her while she is dependently lying in bed. Lucy's only interest is choosing her husband and planning the wedding.

Another topic that was discussed in the thesis is the sexual taboo and the repression that was frequent in the Victorian times. Therefore the part of the Three Sisters was so shocking and their behaviour was considered demonic and unnatural. The way how they express their needs was not usual for anyone. Even though they are not mentioned many times in the story, they leave a certain impression.

One of the chapters introduces the features of the epistolary form of narrating that Stoker mastered. The feeling of looking for puzzle pieces and trying to see the whole picture that is exactly what was the goal and Stoker achieved that by dividing the story into diary entries, newspaper clippings, letters, etc.

Stoker's Irish origin and his whole life spent in London influenced the geographical background of the novel. Britain is presented as a developed empire using all the modern technology to beat the supernatural and disorganized place Transylvania. The technical and scientific advancement blend in with the sublime aspect of the novel, which creates a widely read story.

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