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Erotic Manifestations in Gothic Literature Portrayed on Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897)

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Introduction

The reader can interpret several passages in the novel *Dracula* by Bram Stoker as scenes of horror, but at the same time, they illustrate attractive characteristics as well. Since this is the case, I ask the following question: There is a presence of manifestation of the erotic through the novel *Dracula*? This dissertation examines the insinuations of the erotic that are contained within the narrative and how they are expressed and interpreted, Mudge states 'Eroticism, in turn, names the pleasure of moving between (...) the language of flesh, with its infinite vocabulary and complex narratives, and the flesh of language' (14).

Dracula can be considered the first novel with a different style in Gothic literature, produced due to the character of Count Dracula being a humanized monster, being the other vampires an extensions of this creature, defining Dracula as the opposing force of the story. This statement can be supported by how to this day the novel does not lose its validity. What makes it interesting is the fusion of the main element of Gothic literature, which is horror, with the erotic. I will understand the key terms of *Dracula* through the concepts and definitions, analysing them in detail through the development and interpretation with the support of other studies.

In this work, it will be applied the narrative methodology, which is suitable for this dissertation since an epistolary narrative is developed through the novel. In order to keep the narrative methodology used in the work under control, I resorted to the interpretation of secondary material of *Dracula* and its relation with what the author describes in his

narration. One of the limitations that I identified through the progress of this dissertation was not knowing if the writer wrote the novel with erotic intentions or if it is an interpretation of the reader. On the other hand, the support of historical analysis was necessary for me in order to have a better understanding of its historical context.

Even though there is plenty of research referring to *Dracula*, an approach that considers horror, eroticism, sexual placer, and sexual desire, many cannot be found many studies where these criteria are associated. Because of this, it is my belief that it has not been said enough yet about this novel in regard to how horror can produce sexual desire and sexual pleasure.

Regardless of having uncertainty about the interpretation of the novel, I will develop the idea that Bram Stoker is able to incorporate erotic aspects in *Dracula* through the assaults which the narration depicts in the encounters between victims and vampires with the purpose of producing sexual pleasure and desire in the reader. The contribution of this work has the importance of how horror is related to eroticism in Gothic literature, elaborating the understanding as well as the concept of 'erotic', which is key to the understanding of this work.

The following dissertation will be structured into three chapters, which will analyse the thesis statement of this dissertation. I will start in my first chapter by defining and giving a better understanding of the key concept of 'erotic'. Being distinguish of the concept 'pornography' which is a concept which tends to be confused and how the erotic is related to sexual placer and desire. Lastly, it will be defined in general terms and in

literature and Gothic literature in specific. This is with the purpose of giving a better understanding of how the concept can be perceived in *Dracula*. The second chapter will be centred on discussing the presence of sexual desire in *Dracula*. Since the genre of the novel is horror, I will analyse how there is a connection between horror and sexual desire. Consecutively, I will explain how vampirism is presented in the erotic literature followed by a discussion of where manifestations of desire in *Dracula* can be found. Finally, my third chapter will explain how the narrative is constructed, making the distinction between narrator and character and in what manner it can affect the perception of the narrative when a character experiences sexual pleasure and where we can identify it through the novel.

Chapter One: Eroticism or Pornography?

In this chapter, I will discuss the intricacies of the term ‘erotic’, examining its diverse definitions and their implications for the study of Gothic literature. My objective is to argue that it is a concept of considerable complexity, susceptible to nuanced interpretations. Additionally, I shall refer to the difference between eroticism and pornography, analysing their meaning and articulating as key criteria for their differentiation, particularly in the context of literature. To achieve this, I will draw upon the scholarly works of literary scholars who have undertaken an in-depth exploration of eroticism and pornography. Through a comprehensive engagement with these studies, I aspire to delve more profoundly into the core ideas employed in this dissertation, offering an improved understanding of eroticism in literature.

Definitions of the Erotic

The term ‘erotic’ has no singular and precise definition because it is often subject to individual interpretation, is frequently associated with emotions and feelings, which are expressions we are unable to visually perceive and are connected with matters of a sexual nature. Even though I. F. Moulton does not define the concept of ‘erotic’ in his contribution to *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, but rather defines the term ‘erotic poetry’, stating that it is a literary form in which sexual passion or desire is explored (455), the term can be applied to other literary forms as well. Bradford K Mudge further

elaborates on this notion by asserting that the term describes pleasures that have a sexual component or are potentially of such nature (Mudge 1). Mudge provides an introduction to important debates on the social norms that have influenced the study of erotic literature since ancient times throughout his discussion in his chapter. The problem of distinguishing between socially sanctioned and taboo depictions of human sexuality as a result of social norms is a prominent element of these enduring disputes. The definitions of the term 'erotic' do not constitute significant contradictions; however, they are consistently associated with the domain of sexuality and the evolution of social mentality.

In several analyses aiming to identify the display of eroticism in narrative literature, Brulotte interprets the erotic discourse presented by Marquis de Sade as a valuable narrative device employed by the author. Although I will not delve into the analysis of the literary work of Sade, he concludes that 'the definitions of the *ars erotica* must be extended' (51). Similarly, it is my belief that contribution to the discourse of the erotic emphasizes the need for a broad understanding of eroticism that extends beyond the current perceptions. The extent to which the manifestation of the erotic is discernible within a given discourse can be of considerable significance to this thesis.

Eroticism and Pornography

Regardless of the sexual orientation of the participants, intimate engagements between individuals considered adults are always subject to consent in the external context of literature. With the exception of situations involving coercion or force which

constitute a criminal act, this statement holds true in both erotic and pornographic contexts. However, it must be acknowledged that in Gothic literature we encounter cases of rape, abuse, and harassment. When physical intimacy unfolds within the narrative, the terms 'erotic' and 'pornographic' are often confused, implying an inherent association between them. However, these concepts diverge significantly: while one pursues the gratification of carnal pleasure and is explicit in its content and obscene, the former delves into a broader connection not limited to plain sexual appeal. Thus, the classification of the erotic within the literary genre is intricate, with its manifestation proving equally complex. 'The Utopian Impulse in Popular Literature: Gothic Romances and 'Feminist' Protest' provides insights into the challenges encountered in grappling with this complexity:

'The meaning of the [erotic] genre cannot simply be found in the final disposition of the characters, nor in the way they are newly coded by readers at the conclusion of the tale, but in the way, both situational transformations and coding changes are explained for them by the *developing* action' (Radway 146).

Radway discussed the feminist protest embedded in gothic romances and explained how the narratives in these novels often possess deeper meanings than they tend to believe. Such observation of the author is aligned with my earlier discussions, with the interest of developing further in this presentation how is a distinctive aspect regarding Gothic literature.

It has been acknowledged that feelings and emotions are components of the erotic. Despite alterations in the literary genre prompted by societal changes, literary history has perpetuated a constant portrayal of the erotic. Affirming is a deeper connection that extends beyond the physical, whether with romantic elements or not, as indicated by Mudge:

‘Literary history suggests that the “erotic” was always a diverse and overwhelming menu of possibilities (...) all made use of romantic and/or sexual content, often for very different purposes; and that the languages of eroticism were as numerous and as varied as the bodies and the desires they describe’ (6).

It is imperative to acknowledge that the erotic is bound to clandestine or forbidden knowledge pertaining to the sexual body, as implied by the term ‘curious’ which is connected with eros (Mudge 9). ‘Erotic’ and ‘pornographic’ are distinguished by the explicit representation of sexual intimacy in the latter, whether by writing or by means of visual representation. Moreover, there is no evidence of an emotional relationship, thus allowing a disproportionate amount of attention to be paid to the expression of pleasure.

A pornographic narrative emphasizes sexual encounters between the characters at the expense of emotional connections, a characteristic distinguished from erotic narratives that contain nuanced emotional undercurrents. As Mudge suggests, the concept of eroticism refers to a middle ground where human desire is varied and

complex, a place where respect and mystery can coexist with danger and excitement, at least ideally. 'In between the stolid truths of literature proper and the crude and blatant displays of pornography, the erotic works its magic' (13).

The purpose of pornography is related to the aim of arousing and providing pleasure to the reader, it cannot be certain whether, in the literary gender, the author references their own repressed desires reflected in the work, or rather to bring some change shift in literature. In any of the encounters is absent the connection grounded of emotions, as before mentioned, but more importantly, there is not a direct portrayal, a characteristic often associated with eroticism, its content is rather explicit. In contrast to the literary field, pornography has historically faced censorship and outright prohibition due to its explicit content. The defining feature of pornographic literature lies in its concise narratives, designed to elicit arousal through explicit sexual content, provoking a sense of urgency in the reader to reach climax, all within a clandestine framework: 'libertine literature had effectively given way to something that would soon be called "pornography": sexually explicit fiction intended to arouse its audience and to appeal to a broad, rather than select, readership' (Mudge 135).

Although sexuality may be discernible within the erotic, pornography differs in its focus in spite of its thematic foundation in sexuality. Instead of focusing on flirtation, it focuses on the expression of the human body within sexual settings. In pornographic literature, the narrative trajectory does not necessarily end in a tragic or happy ending; instead, its resolution is designed to facilitate the reader's ecstasy within the narrative.

During the Gothic literature period, the explicit content of pornography faced scrutiny and condemnation, being perceived by society as follows: “‘pornography’ became its demonic counterpart, Devil tales that seduce readers away from family, church, and state’ (Mudge 136).

What is Eroticism in Gothic Literature?

Having now a better understanding of the pivotal term, we are prompted to inquire into the nature of eroticism within Gothic literature. What constitutes its manifestation? Does its meaning change when applied to Gothic literature? Among Gothic literature's distinct features is its tendency to emphasize fear, suspense, and supernatural elements. The narratives of this genre often contain themes such as harassment, abuse, and rape. Moreover, it is not uncommon in some cases to observe the merge of both horror and eroticism, more particularly the desire, within the novels of the genre.

In the incorporation of manifestations of erotic encounters, sexual pleasure and desire can be identified, Mudge asserts that ‘The relationship between eros and literature begins with pleasure: pleasure of the body, pleasure of the text, pleasure of wondering how each affects the other’ (1). Mudge’s assertion refers to the equivalence between the textual content and its portrayal of carnal pleasure. In this context ‘pleasure’ refers to the experience which involves enjoying something, contrasting with pain and suffering.

It is essential to recognize that during this period explicit narration of physical relations between characters was forbidden due to censorship norms called ‘the Obscene Publications Act of 1857’ (Mudge 135). Consequently, authors resorted to allusive to evade it. Nevertheless, Gothic literature surpasses these carnal relations in its portrayal of erotic encounters, inquiring into more intimate interactions and captivating the reader through linguistic seduction, as I will illustrate with *Dracula*. Taking this situation into account, I believe it is necessary to pay close attention to the pleasures that are specifically associated with language when considering the relationship between the diverse genres of literature and eros. The pleasures are often a result of diction, syntax, or narrative, or they may arise from characters, settings, or plots (Mudge 5).

Erotic scenes in literature often revolve around innuendos such as the touch of a hand or the intensity of a gaze, with a primary accentuation on the implicit portrayal of eroticism rather than explicit descriptions of a naked body. As suggested by Brulotte, ‘the subjective is dominant, placing the accent less on the attractive object itself than on the perceiving subject and the subsequent emotional effects’ (52). In literary eroticism, the emphasis is rather on desire and sexual pleasure than physical beauty, something supported in the secondary material, ‘beauty is not exclusive in erotic discourse, since ugliness and age also have virtues that stimulate the appetite’ (Brulotte 52). Consequently, such moments are not concentrated in specific segments of the narrative where we encounter the characters having sexual interactions. Rather, they are distributed throughout the story, something characteristic of Gothic literature.

This chapter sought to provide a profound understanding of the conceptual distinctions associated with 'erotic' and 'pornographic' as well as their connection to pleasure and sexuality. Moreover, one of the major themes of this chapter revolved around the exploration of how these concepts are perceived in a narrative context, especially within Gothic literature.

Chapter Two: Sexual Desire in *Dracula*

Having a better understanding that eroticism is present in literature through linguistic innuendos as well as indirect portrayals through narration. This chapter will examine the connection between horror and sexual desire, how the monstrosity of the vampire is used in erotic literature, and how *Dracula* exemplifies sexual desire. Providing evidence to support my claims, I will argue that the dynamic between vampires and their victims has a crucial impact on identifying vampires as embodying sexuality and producing sexual desires. In order to support my ideas, I will employ a number of literary works to provide a more profound understanding. Specifically, this chapter will examine how vampires can play a role in erotic interactions, specifically in *Dracula*, and how they can produce the sexual desires of their victims.

The Relation Between Horror and Sexual Desire

The hidden, the insinuated, the forbidden, and the ominous evoke a specific sense of fear, concurrently arousing a sensation of pleasure established in the perception of well-being derived through the written and reading depictions of diverse characters within the narrative. The characters contribute to the imagination, eliciting a variety of pleasant responses, influenced by the embrace of beliefs, myths, religions, and the rejection of alternative manifestations. Something similar is stated by Santilli, who considers the potential for a postmodern ethics accountable for the ‘horrors of being’ generated by globalization, this article develops a framework for aesthetic and existential horror. Giving particular attention to the understanding in comprehending

both modern and postmodern cultural dynamics states ‘the emotion of horror is generated by beliefs, thoughts, or judgments about a particular kind of object’ (176). This integration propels the reader swiftly toward the aim to establish how Stoker can produce sexual pleasure and desire in the reader through the narration of the encounters between victims and vampires.

In response to the constrictions of the period where reason held precedence over all actions, the Gothic novel served as an expressive reflection of the liberation of emotions, interlacing horror, and desire. Further, this fusion incorporates the supernatural with the natural, and the suggestive with the explicit, thus avoiding censorship in a strategic manner. An important factor in this work is the author’s choice of a vampire as a symbol of horror, traditionally viewed as a symbol of malevolence. Demetrakopoulos studies in her article the subliminal attempt of Stoker to convey feminist contents as well as how it works other attractions of the novel subliminally and the author asserts that when it comes to sexuality, vampires are integrally related (111), Stoker does is with bestows them humanlike qualities, economic prowess, aristocratic status, intelligence, sagacity, and knowledge to imbue with eroticism to the vampire.

In his scholarly work, Mathias Clasen analyses the narrative technique employed by Bram Stoker, particularly in the context of the societal impact of *Dracula*. Clasen asserts that vampires portray a range of emotions that extend from our most profound fears to the depth of our deepest desires (393). The main fears which are being pointed out can be foremost vampires are the first monsters which are predators and feed

exclusively on humans, death may not be immediate as we saw in the novel, but it is inevitable to happen in some moment and be violent. As a result of their diet, they produce the individual to reflect on their own death and the fears of life after it, thus producing the horror in *Dracula*. Although Elisabeth Anker analyses liberalism, she studies how its counterpart is horror and how narratives can portray it. In this sense, liberalism utilizes the conventions of horror to rhetorically secure consent to liberal governance by manipulating the literary genre. Anker asserts something of the literary gender of horror explaining that ‘Horror is a genre form known for mobilizing and intensifying fear through narratives of terror and scenes of violence’ (795). The scenes of fear and violence can be identified through *Dracula* when the vampires attack their victims, enhancing the feeling of fear towards these creatures.

Nevertheless, the ‘deepest desires’ referred to by Clasen can be connected to the sexual desire the victims experience when they are being attacked and the desire to become a vampire. In the article of Jennifer Wicke, which analyses *Dracula* narrative and how the author is able to fuse the vampire with characteristics of the mythological, medieval mystery and the anxiety placed in Gothic aesthetic, she explains how the act of feeding from the vampires can be considered as sexual stating ‘The vampiric consumption of blood in *Dracula* is simultaneously and complexly a sexual act (...) and its process holds both victim and perpetrator in a version of sexual thrall or ecstasy’ (Wicke 479). Considering vampires are able to drink from the veins of the human neck and have to use their mouth in order to do so, the act of placing the mouth in such a place is considered intimate. The sexual ecstasy pointed out by Wicke can be related to

the idea of the vampire being the predator. The hunting inverses both the vampire and the victim in a race of who will be able to overcome, finding the vampire bliss in the act of feeding once he triumphs. I will discuss the idea of how vampires can produce sexual desire in their victims through their attacks further in the chapter.

Walker analyses in his chapter the connection between Christina Rossetti's poetry with the dynamics of Stoker's novel *Dracula* regarding addictions, although I will not analyse Rossetti, there are statements regarding *Dracula* which can be useful to this work. In his conclusion, Walker states: 'In Bram Stoker's Gothic novel *Dracula* the boundaries between life and death are more fundamentally called into question' (Walker 255). In the novel, eternal life is portrayed as a possibility, as there are no signs of ageing or dying as a result of diseases. This intellectual prospect of an unlimited life was something that drew the reader because the novel was popular.

Furthermore, vampires embody both sexual desire and pleasure, the creature has a principal role in producing pleasure in erotic interactions, giving them liberty in the field of sexuality. There are questions regarding the vampires which are unanswered in the novel, conferring them a mystery, the book of Jack Morgan suggests the horror literature tradition is an aesthetic which includes a physiological constitution, whereas horror includes rationality and an imminent biological that challenges the rational, and he explains 'mystery incarnate, the occasion of birth, life, sexuality, and death as well as of all disease, nightmare, and terror' (22). Through the mystery, vampires embody fear and desire and transform them into something intriguing and attractive. That is how both

horror and desire are connected: they turn these elements that are supposed to induce fear into something appealing.

Vampirism and the Erotic Literature

In my preceding chapter, I delineated the term ‘erotic’, which incorporates sexual features, manifesting through linguistic innuendos the pleasure inherent in interpersonal interactions. Through these innuendos, the author is able to portray allusively the portrayal of sexuality in the vampires. Employing these literary tools, vampirism and erotica become intertwined, converging towards a shared objective: the cultivation of pleasure for readers through the gratification they offer.

As well, vampires are an instrument adopted by authors to explore eroticism in literature: vampires communicate the erotic with their actions and dialogues. Using the same tools, vampirism and erotica are intertwined, aiming to achieve a common goal: to produce pleasure for the readers through the enjoyment they provide.

Clasen claims that authors are inclined to utilize vampires as elements to present an understanding of eroticism due to ‘authors and readers are attracted to vampires because of their salience and metaphorical juiciness, their capacity for the embodiment of salient (...) desires’ (392). It is my belief that the aforementioned affirmation of vampires being able to take the role of producing sexual desires is the reason why the reader as well as the author feels attracted to them. It can be asserted that this monster is essential in introducing the experience of sexuality into the narrative. The creature

allows authors the opportunity to embody sexual desire and pleasure, proving readers to experience these aspects.

Furthermore, Christopher Craft, delving into a more profound study of monstrosity, examines the portrayal of Victorian cultural anxieties through the aspect of vampirism in *Dracula*. Craft proposes that writers embody sexuality in the creature of a vampire, arguing that ‘vampirism both expresses and distorts an originally sexual energy (...) the representation of desire under the defensive mask of monstrosity’ (107). Hence, it can be inferred that the monstrosity of the vampirism, allows authors and readers a degree of freedom to delve into the fields of pleasure and desire.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in his study of the Marquis de Sade, Brulotte examined several approaches to identifying eroticism within the narrative and his analysis is useful to the discussion in this chapter. The discourse in which vampires are presented serves as a means to challenge societal values through fiction, without distinction between queer or straight relationships. Brulotte asserts that this narrative strategy: ‘helps to undermine an ordered system of values, exploding its concentric organisation, acting as an antidote to the poison of uniformity and as a challenge to the status quo’ (53).

Manifestation of Desire in Dracula

In the first reading of *Dracula*, we can experience horror due to the actions of the Count against other characters throughout the story. However, we can become more

conscious of the displays of desire within the horror experiences encountered by the characters if we analyse the interactions and narration. Radway points out about this occurrence that even though popular novels appear simple at first glance, they are always made up of a linear narrative with a predetermined sequence of temporal stages and a meaning that must be actively constructed by the reader (141). The role the reader has in the interpretation is fundamental, since it is the response to what the author tries to manifest. Such is the case of Stoker's novel, *Dracula* is not only a Gothic novel with horror and supernatural aspects, rather the narration of the story is more complex than one tends to believe, where the presence of the erotic is present through innuendos and direct narration as it has been discussed and analysed through this chapter.

As portrayed in *Dracula*, vampires are entities characterized by intricate and profound existences. They serve as figures of fear, but they also encapsulate the essence of sexual liberation, allowing the expression of desire to be communicated through their actions and their discourse, beyond just being mere representations of fear. Thus, the dread is represented in several passages within the novel, illustrated by the malignant carriage and the sinister coachman accompanying Jonathan Harker's journey from Germany to Transylvania, Romania. Later, he travels a road alongside a pack of wolves, in between enveloping darkness, and supernatural stories, culminating in his arrival at the Count's castle. Whose walls are dilapidated, and its owner features the ability to ascend them similarly to a spider, coupled with his lack of reflection in a mirror. It is therefore necessary for the narrative to depict vampires as a mixture of horror and desire in order to achieve its intended purpose.

Having alluded to the fears, it must be considered that given the social restraints of the time, characterized by a lack of openness towards sexuality, sexual tension and desire are distinctions absent in the interactions among characters, particularly those betrothed. This absence encourages an environment where the presence of desire between characters is left to the individual reader's imagination. It appears that the presence of a monstrous element is needed to evoke the experiences that are lacking in romantic relationships.

The only encounter between Harker and the female vampires is valuable to this presentation, analysing the seduction of the desire presented in Stoker's narrative and its connection to eroticism. The narrative of the novel implies desire through an allusive narration:

Lower and lower went her head as the *lips* went below the range of my *mouth* and chin (...) could feel the *hot breath* on my neck (...) it approaches nearer—nearer. I could feel the *soft, shivering touch* of the lips (...) the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in a *languorous ecstasy* and *waited*—waited with beating heart. (Stoker 39) (my emphasis).

The response described by Harker towards the vampires can be recognised as desireful. The emotions he is experiencing can be connected to sexual desire considering the sexual connotations the passage has such as 'lips', 'hot breath', 'mouth', 'shivering touch', 'languorous ecstasy', and 'soft'. A phrase like 'lower and lower' cannot be

ignored. We as readers have no clear understanding of how 'low' she went, and it is only at the end that we are able to determine the degree of her descent. According to Kathleen L. Spencer, in *Dracula* 'almost all readings presume a given sexuality that is repressed and displaced throughout the text' (197). She develops a new kind of historical reading of Stoker's novel, linking the novel to its broader literary context and, interpreting vampirism in relation to other fantastic novels which also explore sexual dynamics. This extract of the novel is precise in demonstrating how Harker is having a sexual encounter with the vampires and to what degree their interaction with their victims can be portrayed as erotic.

It should be noted, however, that desire is not limited to heterosexual interactions, and we can see some manifestations of desire between the Count and Harker. The Count's desire for Harker may have been satisfied by the interaction between Harker and the female vampire due to the social norms that did not allow queer relationships at the time. Adut centres her article on the apparent incongruent in the Victorian perspectives on homosexuality and delves into the dynamics of Oscar Wilde's affair, despite her focus on Oscar Wilde, she explains the context of Britain with their perception of homosexuality explaining 'Britain stood out at the turn of the 20th century as the only country in Western Europe that criminalized all male homosexual acts with draconian penalties' (Adut 214). Therefore, it can be understood that Stoker should have avoided an erotic encounter between Harker and Count because of the laws and social norms of the era. Craft explains that: 'the vampire mouth is at its very core Dracula's mouth, and that all subsequent versions of it (...) are merely diminished simulacra of

Dracula's desire' (109). Having the female vampires have such experience with Harker is like Dracula experiencing it through them since he is the main source of that desire. The aforementioned can be recognised in the novel when Harker is being seduced by three vampires when Dracula finds them and interrupts their seduction attempt by removing the female vampire who was bent over him, pulling the other vampires away from him and shouting at them: "How *dare* you *touch him*, any of you? How dare you *cast eyes* on him when I had *forbidden* it? Back, I tell you all! This man *belongs to me!*" (Stoker 39) (my emphasis). The expressions used by Dracula such as 'dare you to touch him' 'forbidden it' and 'belongs to me' are explicit about how he has a sense of asset for him. If Harker had experienced instead such a moment with the Count, is most likely the narrative and the response toward the circumstance would have been much different, not allowing distinctions of eroticism.

This idea of his desire for Harker can be supported by the following passage: 'I saw that the cut had bled a little, and the *blood was trickling* over my chin (...) When the Count saw my face, his *eyes blazed* with a sort of *demoniac fury*' (Stoker 27-28). Harker detailed in his diary how he was getting distressed by the place and the absence of people in it when he had a strange incident with the Count. What is interesting about this extract is how inclusive it is with the presence of the erotic. The word 'fury' has a sexual connotation and is not being used with its formal meaning, but as a conceal to refer to the desire the Count felt when he saw the blood. It is only when we discover Dracula is a vampire that we understand this encounter is about the desire the Count feels towards the blood spilt.

As narrated in this second chapter, there is a relation between the character Dracula, depicted as a vampire, who in turn embodies horror and sexual desire in the erotic literature present in Gothic literature. It is my belief the contribution given in this chapter consisted in the understanding of how a creature that reflects horror can evoke a sexual desire.

Chapter Three: Sexual Pleasure in *Dracula*

In this chapter, I will examine the variety of narrators in *Dracula* and identify where sexual pleasure is present. Through the novel, I will examine how it can affect interpretations of erotic interactions when vampires produce pleasure in their victims and when it can be identified as a sexual encounter. My argument will be supported by a number of literary works that will assist me in giving a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The importance of this chapter lies in its analysis of how vampires can illustrate sexual pleasure during erotic encounters as well as their role in producing it, making the distinction between the narrator and the characters.

Narrator and Characters

It is necessary to make the distinction between the narrator of this novel and the characters. As I mentioned before, the novel has an epistolary narration, therefore, we do not have a singular narrator throughout the whole novel. Being constructed through different points of view, Walker compares this narrative with the act of how vampires feed: '*Dracula* is a text that fundamentally thrives upon addictions, from the basic starting point of a blood-sucking ghoul to a compulsive need by the protagonists to tell the story from as many different points of view as possible and through as many different mediums' (Walker 253). Although the novel is narrated by different characters and sources, the vampire never participates in the narration. Stoker does not reflect the feelings of the vampires even though they are the source of producing pleasure.

Take for example the passage where Mina finds Lucy unconscious in the middle of the night in the garden and notices a strange figure above her, quoting ‘There was undoubtedly something, long and black, bending over the half-reclining white figure’ (Stoker 87). Being Lucy the white figure, it can be concluded the ‘long and black’ form is Dracula. What is key to this passage is the case that we never have the narration of Lucy or Dracula to know what they had experienced in that encounter, even though the vampire has the dominant role in the attack. The only time Lucy refers to her connection with Dracula is when writes a short passage in her journal once she is recovering from her fatal state before dying: ‘the noises that used to frighten me out of my wits—the flapping against the windows, the *distant voices* which seemed so close to me, the harsh sounds that came from I know not where and *commanded me to do I know not what*—have all ceased’ (Stoker 127) (my emphasis). It is left to the reader to interpret what she is referring to when she explains ‘distant voices’ and ‘commanded me to do I know not what’, implying implicitly that these descriptions are related to a possible connection of her with Dracula.

However, as could be noticed in the example, sometimes characters are narrators and sometimes they are just characters. Occasionally when we have a scene of horror not always the narrator is the victim, but rather a character witnessing the attack. When Mina tries to wake up Lucy after she finds her unconscious, she notices how still asleep Lucy is agitated: “[I] began very gently to wake her. At first she did not respond; but gradually she became more and more uneasy in her sleep, moaning and sighing occasionally” (Stoker 87). From Mina’s perception, we can notice Lucy is experiencing

sexual pleasure due to the biting, however, Dracula is nowhere to be seen. What is key to this passage is the case that Mina witnessed Dracula feeding from Lucy without knowing, yet, we never have the narration of Lucy to know what she had felt in such an encounter with the Count.

Reports of a creature attacking children started to appear after the death of Lucy. After searching and corroborating with Dr John Seward that Lucy has converted into a vampire and is responsible for the disappearance of the children, they take Quincy Morris and Arthur to convince them of it and be able to kill her before she kills someone else. When the group faces Lucy as a vampire, John narrates how she responds protective over the kid she was drinking from, but once she recognises Arthur her attitude changes, alluring the man by saying “‘Come to me, Arthur. Leave these others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you” (...) There was something diabolically sweet in her tones (...) As for Arthur, he seemed under a spell; moving his hands from his face, he opened wide his arms’ (Stoker 197). Now that Lucy has taken the form of a vampire, she embodies sexuality by taking a principal role in the erotic interactions, Wicke explains this idea by indicating that ‘Lucy hunts the parks, but turns to her fiancé Arthur when she hopes to consummate her vampirism with an erotic meal’ (Wicke 480). I consider that the ‘diabolically sweet in her tones’ indicates a desirable tone in her voice which attracts Arthur, seducing the man toward her ‘hungry arms’. However sexual desire is not the only aspect present in Lucy’s words, which implies she is alluring Arthur in search of the sexual placer she could not have when she was human and can be found once she feeds from him.

The Presence of Sexual Pleasure in Dracula

This study highlights the interrelationship between vampires and the erotic in literary fiction by examining the interactions between vampires and their victims. A distinct sense of eroticism is present, particularly when it comes to sexual pleasure and desire. In the encounter with the female vampires, Harker is exploring the castle and loses consciousness when he hits his head in one of the rooms, when he wakes up he realises is not alone and there are three females with him, Harker's narrative of the description of his reaction is noteworthy: "He is young and strong; there are *kisses* for us all." I lay quiet, looking out under my eyelashes in an agony of *delightful anticipation*' (Stoker 38) (my emphasis). This passage highlights the sexual pleasure derived from the vampires' longing for Harker's blood. Harker's response is remarkable because he does not express fear or confusion, but rather a sense of 'delightful anticipation' towards what lies ahead. Jeff Nunokawa, in his exploration of novels' ability to depict and articulate sexual desire, particularly in the Victorian period, points out, 'sexual desires are everywhere in the Victorian novel, either as an explicit topic or as a subterranean force close enough to the surface that it may as well be' (126). The identification of sexual desire as a 'subterranean force' is subtly inserted in the interactions between characters in *Dracula*, as we could encounter in the excerpt, but we can as well identify the presence of sexual pleasure.

Within this narrative, female characters embodying sexual desire and pleasure can be encountered, distinctively exemplified by the three female vampires, as

previously discussed, and the character of Lucy. Lucy's eroticism stands out for its overt sexualization, evident even before she was transformed into a vampire. A crucial instance illustrating this statement is found in Mina's journal entry, where Lucy is sleepwalking outside the house for the first time, and she encounters Lucy unconscious in the garden: 'Her *lips were parted*, and she was breathing—not softly, as usual with her, but in *long, heavy gasps*' (Stoker 87) (my emphasis). The interesting aspect of this excerpt lies in the explicit nature of sexual pleasure. The account becomes more apparent are the descriptors chosen such as 'long, heavy gasps', suggesting agitated breathing for reasons left to the reader's imagination.

Furthermore, Mina provides further insight in the following lines: 'she put her hand to her *throat* again and *moaned* (...) [I] began very gently to wake her. At first, she did not respond; but gradually she became more and more *uneasy* in her sleep, *moaning* and *sighing* occasionally' (Stoker 87) (my emphasis). Given the way Lucy is being portrayed in this passage, the expressions employed by the author in the character of the novel reflect erotic feelings, which were not explicitly expressed during Stoker's time, but which can be interpreted as such because of the way they behave and are described.

In conclusion, according to the analysis realised to the narration of Stoker in *Dracula*, I allow myself to affirm that the author can incorporate erotic distinctions in *Dracula* which can be identified in the exchanges among the characters. I supported my analysis with different authors, which were helpful to understand in a more profound reflection.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be indicated that it is important to establish the concepts and general definitions in order to reach the specific, as it was worked in the first chapter. In the following chapter, I analyse further into *Dracula* and what my purpose would be in connecting horror with sexual desire. At the end of the analysis of the chapter, regarding the narrators, is relevant how vampires never narrate, and characters sometimes serve as narrators while others serve as just characters at times. Finally, horror was analysed and related to the sexual pleasure the victims experienced, which is a fundamental idea in my dissertation.

Regarding the strength of my arguments, I consider it is relevant to highlight the consistency of beginning from the general concepts to reach the most specific. At the same time, is important to consider the sources referred to and how the extracts from *Dracula* agree with my arguments. However, the limitations I found in the development of this dissertation were that I did not explore the historical context and being unaware of the purpose of the author in the manifestation of his narrative.

The problem I encountered in the first place was the time, on the other hand, having to cope with the concept of 'eroticism' from a literary perspective, since talking about eroticism is closely related to psychology. Its definitions mostly have a psychological approach, consequently, it makes the approach more difficult in the field of literature.

As a last reflection, it was interesting to find out how horror can be interwind with the erotic since both are feelings, with aspects which merge them. Furthermore, it gave the possibility of having a greater open mind to observe that novels which have a manifestation of the erotic have interesting actions which can be learned.

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