

Vamping the Woman: Menstrual Pathologies in Bram Stoker's Dracula

Maria Parsons

To destroy the vampire, suppress the menstruating woman and to look away from the Medusa, the embodiment of dangerous looking, are all responses to the masculine fear of the female.

(Marie Mulvey-Roberts)(1)

The polarised dialectic of the idealised, perfect woman and the demonised, sexual woman has dominated Western separatist ideology for centuries. In terms of the body, it reaches a significant impasse in the nineteenth century. During the Victorian period, scientific and medical advances developed alongside a resurgence of feminist activism, particularly so, from the 1860s onwards. The female activist was embodied in the concept of the 'New Woman'. According to Lyn Pykett:

[...] the New Woman was a representation. She was a construct, 'a condensed symbol of disorder and rebellion' (Smith-Rosenberg), who was actively produced and reproduced in the pages of the newspaper and periodical press, as well as in novels. (2)

The New Woman not only posed a threat to the social order but also to the natural order, and was represented as 'simultaneously non-female, unfeminine, and ultra-feminine.'(3) Incorporated into varying depictions of the New Woman was a consistent perception of her as over-sexed and unduly interested in sexual matters. Correspondingly, scientific and medical discourses began to mirror public opinion. As such, female sexuality became the locus of attention in the medical world; with the womb, the reproductive organs, and the menstrual cycle, becoming primary sites for medical inquiry and pathologising.

Prior to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the "one-sex" model dominated medical thinking in relation to the human body. For years it was commonly accepted that male and female genitals were the same. In Latin or Greek, or in the European vernaculars until around 1700, there was no separate term 'for vagina as the tube or sheath into which its opposite, the penis fits and through which the infant is born.'(4) It was not until the late eighteenth century that the common discourse about sex and the body changed. Organs that had shared a name – ovaries and testicles – were now linguistically distinguished. The context for the articulation of two distinct sexes was, however, according to the historian Thomas Laqueur, neither a theory of knowledge nor a reflection of advances in scientific knowledge, instead, he attributes reinterpretations of the body to

The rise of Evangelical religion, Enlightenment political theory, the development of new sorts of public spaces in the eighteenth century, Lockean ideas of marriage as a contract, the cataclysmic possibilities for social change wrought by the French Revolution, post-revolutionary conservatism, post-revolutionary feminism, the factory system with its

restructuring of the sexual division of labour, the rise of a free market economy in services or commodities, the birth of classes, singly or in combination – none of these things caused the making of a new sexed body. Instead, the remaking of the body is itself intrinsic to each of these developments. (5)

One of the foremost exponents in medical developments and theorizing of the female reproductive organs, particularly, menstruation organs in the nineteenth century was Dr Edward Tilt who published extensively on the subject in the latter half of the nineteenth century. His work included titles such as *The Change of Life in Health and Disease*, *The Elements of Health*, and *Principles of Female Hygiene*, *On the Preservation of the Health of Women at the Critical Periods of Life* to *A Handbook of Uterine Therapeutics and of Diseases of Women*. According to Tilt, regulation of the menstrual cycle was imperative to both the physical and mental health of women. As Laqueur notes

All in all, the theory of the menstrual cycle dominant from the 1840s to the early twentieth century rather neatly integrated a particular set of real discoveries into an imagined biology of incommensurability. Menstruation, with its attendant aberrations, became a uniquely and distinguishingly female process. (6)

A nineteenth century medical text by Adam Raciborski entitled *Traité de la menstruation, ses rapports avec l'ovulation, la fécondation, l'hygiène de la puberté et l'âge critique, son rôle dans les différentes maladies, ses troubles et leur traitement*, (7) made the connection between menstruation and heat. Writing in an early section on heat in dogs and cats he draws an analogy between the menses and heat in women. He states 'We will see that the turgescence – the crisis – of menstruation (l'orgasme de l'ovulation) is one of the most powerful causes of over-excitement in women.'(8) From the 1840s on, menstrual bleeding became the sign of swelling and explosion whose corresponding behavioural manifestations were aligned with sexual excitement and animals in heat. Thus, the menstruating woman was rendered as "out of control" and in need of containment.

Practical developments in obstetrics and gynaecology also contributed to the focus on the menses as the primary cause of physical and mental ill-health in women. In particular, the redevelopment of the the speculum and the curette, revolutionised gynaecological practice. Furthermore, menstrual out-flow was measured and its consistency and colour recorded in order to determine normative points of reference. This both allowed and contributed to the diagnosis and treatment of a wide ranging number of female ailments as menstrual.

Concomitant with the medical fixation on the menstrual cycle in the Victorian period is the cultural obsession in art and literature with women and snakes and/or women and vampires. The alignment of women with snakes and vampires reinforced notions of female sexuality as lascivious and licentious. Bram Dijkstra appraises this obsession as a logical leap from the myth of Eve and her temptation by the serpent in the proverbial Garden of Eden to modern womanhood in the nineteenth century. He states:

In the evil, bestial implications of her beauty, woman was not only tempted by the snake but was the snake herself. Among the terms used to describe a woman's appearance none were more over-used during the late-nineteenth century than 'serpentine', 'sinuous', and 'snake-like. (9)

He continues linking Lamia and late-nineteenth century feminism, claiming:

The link between Lamia and the late nineteenth-century feminists, the viragoes – the wild women – would have been clear to any intellectual reasonably well versed in classical mythology, since Lamia of myth was thought to have been a bisexual, masculinized, cradle-robbing creature, and therefore to the men of the turn of the century perfectly representative of the New Woman who, in their eyes, was seeking to arrogate to herself male privileges, refused the duties of motherhood, and was intent upon destroying the heavenly harmony of feminine subordination in the family. The same was certainly true of Lilith, who, in her unwillingness to play second fiddle to Adam, was, as Rosseti's work already indicated, widely regarded as the world's first virago. (10)

The analogy of women and snakes as well as having obvious roots in Genesis and Classical mythology is also located in menstrual myths. In many cultures it is believed that a girl's first menstrual bleeding occurs when a snake descends from the moon and bites her. According to Mircea Eliade, the moon-animal par-excellence has been the snake. He states:

All over the East it was believed that woman's first sexual contact was with a snake, at puberty or during menstruation. The Komati tribe in the Mysore province of India use snakes made of stone in a rite to bring about the fertility of women. Claudius Aelianus declares that the Hebrews believed that snakes mated with unmarried girls and we also find this belief in Japan. A Persian tradition says that after the first woman had been seduced by the serpent she immediately began to menstruate. And it was said by the rabbis that menstruation was the result of Eve's relations with the serpent in the Garden of Eden. In Abyssinia it was thought that girls were in danger of being raped by snakes until they were married. One Algerian story tells how a snake escaped when no one was looking and raped all the unmarried girls in a house ... Certainly the menstrual cycle helps to explain the spread of the belief that the moon is the first mate of all women. The Papoos thought menstruation was a proof that women and girls were connected with the moon, but in their iconography (sculptures on wood) they pictured reptiles emerging from their genital organs, which confirms that snakes and the moon are identified. (11)

This connection between snakes, the moon and menstruation is further observed by Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove who pose the question 'Why snakes?' and, in response, point out that

during an eclipse of the sun (during which time it was thought by Pliny to be particularly dangerous), the moon's shadow rushing towards you across the land ripples with the refractions of the earth's atmosphere like snakes round the moon's shadow, if you use smoked glass. However, we have also seen that it is a common cultural image of menstruation that a woman is bitten by a snake-god who comes from the moon. The moon sloughs herself and renews, just as the snake sheds its skin, and so does the sexually undulant wall of the womb renew its wall after one wave-peak of the menstrual cycle: the woman renews her sexual self after shedding blood as the snake sheds its skin. The wavy waters of the tidal sea are comparable to swimming snakes, and a good vaginal orgasm can feel to one's penis like a sea undulant with such snakes: a sea which is, of course, tidal with the monthly period. (12)

Ancient languages also gave the serpent the same name, Eve, a name meaning 'Life' and according to the most ancient myths the original primal couple constituted a serpent/goddess dyad. Also the legendary Basilisk is said to be born of menstrual blood and is derived from the classical myth of the serpent-haired Gorgon. (13)

The nineteenth-century lunar influenced, fanged-vampire exploits age-old links between serpents, female sexuality and menstruation. The most famous vampire text of the Victorian period is undoubtedly Bram Stoker's *Dracula* described by Marie Mulvey-Roberts as

[..] Far more than a novel about pathologies. [...] its gendering of male blood as good and female blood as bad signals that it is menstrual blood and its pathologies that provoke a sense of horror. [...] Stoker's attention to the relationship between women and blood is a surrogate for menstrual taboo, which is also eroticized haemofetishism. At the same time, it is a reinforcement of the Victorian conservative medical view that menstruation should be morbidified. (14)

Although Mulvey-Roberts' seminal essay 'Dracula and the Doctors: Bad Blood, Menstrual Taboo and the New Woman' comprehensively explores menstrual pathologies in *Dracula*, I depart from her reading of the vampire as merely a metaphor for menstruation or as a 'surrogate for menstrual taboo' and will argue instead that the vampire in Stoker's text functions as a displaced embodiment of female sexuality and menstrual blood, demonstrating stratifications of power and the interaction of a multiplicity of (pseudo)-medical and moral discourses. In this article, I will focus on the character of Lucy Westenra as an example of Victorian socio-cultural and psycho-sexual anxieties pertaining to women. From her first encounter with *Dracula* to her final beheading and staking, Lucy is an exemplary case study in the pathologising of menstruation and the control and containment of female sexuality.

From Jonathan Harker's initial moonlight journey to Castle *Dracula*, to his moonlight encounter with the three vampire wives of his host, the motif of the moon dominates the narrative. Lucy's nocturnal,

sleepwalking nightmare through the streets of Whitby, her ascent to the graveyard and her encounter with the vampiric Count are illuminated by a full moon.

There was a bright full moon, with heavy black clouds, which threw the whole scene into a fleeting diorama of light and shade as they sailed across [...] Whatever my expectation was, it was not disappointed, for there, on our favourite seat, the silver light of the moon struck a half-reclining figure, snowy white. The coming of the cloud was too quick for me to see much for shadow shut down on light almost immediately; but it seemed to me as though something dark stood behind the seat where the white figure shone, and bent over it. What it was whether man or beast, I could not tell [...] When I got almost to the top I could see the seat and the white figure, for I was close enough to distinguish it even through the spells of shadow. There was undoubtedly something, long and black, bending over the half-reclining white figure. [...] When I came into view again the cloud had passed, and the moonlight struck so brilliantly that I could see Lucy half reclining with her head lying over the back of the seat. She was quite alone, and there was not a sign of any living thing about. (15)

The supine posture of Lucy in this scene is undeniably sexual and her nocturnal sleep-walking and encounter with Dracula reeks of illicit sexuality. Her sexual defilement or moreover her own expression of innate sexuality augers her eventual demise and descent into an uncontrollable blood-thirst, described by Stoker in terms akin to nymphomania. From the outset, Lucy is an example of the discontented Victorian woman, uneasy with her prescribed role. Her coquettish sexuality, flirtatiousness and flaunting of idealised, Victorian womanhood are evident in her response to a series of received marriage proposals. In a letter to her friend Mina Harker, she writes:

My dear Mina, why are men so noble when we women are so little worth of them? Here I was almost making fun of this great-hearted, true gentleman. I burst into tears – I am afraid, my dear, you will think this a very sloppy letter in more ways than one – and I really felt very badly. Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble? But this is heresy, and I must not say it. (16)

'Marriage' has a double meaning in this extract, on a superficial level it means exactly what it suggests but on another level it is a codified expression for sexual relations. Lucy, discontent and uneasy with her restricted role as 'woman' has no choice but to suppress any desire to explore her sexuality and is compelled to fulfil her duty as a middle-class Victorian woman. Masochistic self-abnegation is her only option in a society which rigorously denies any expression of female sexuality. In fact, her physical and mental deterioration commence when she accepts Arthur Holmwood's marriage proposal. From this point of submission, to her nocturnal encounter with Dracula, it becomes apparent that she is incapable of fulfilling her required role. It is therefore, unsurprising and indicative of the cultural period that Lucy's encounter with Dracula coincides with a physical deterioration in her health. Mina describes Lucy as 'ill; that is she has no special disease, but

she looks awful, and is getting worse everyday'(17) and Dr Seward describes her condition as 'bloodless' but lacking the usual anaemic signs. He continues:

In other physical matters I was quite satisfied that there is no need for anxiety; but as there must be a cause somewhere, I have come to the conclusion that it must be something mental. She complains of difficulty in breathing satisfactorily at times, and of heavy lethargic sleep, with dreams that frighten her, but regarding which she can remember nothing. She says that as a child she used to walk in her sleep, and that when in Whitby the habit came back, and that once she walked out in the night and went to the East Cliff where Miss Murray found her; but she assures me that of late the habit has not returned. (18)

Furthermore, Dr Seward is a psychiatrist and notably the most common approach to treating any signs of female sexual transgression in Victorian England was psychiatric. As Elaine Showalter points out in her work on women and madness, *The Female Malady*,

Victorian psychiatry defined its task with respect to women as the preservation of brain stability in the face of almost overwhelming physical odds. First of all, this entailed the management and regulation, insofar as possible, of women's periodic physical cycles and sexuality ... Nineteenth-century medical treatments designed to control the reproductive system strongly suggest male psychiatrists' fears of female sexuality. Indeed, uncontrollable sexuality seemed the major, almost defining symptom of insanity in women. (19)

The treatment of Lucy's illness (through blood transfusions) obviates the Victorian obsession with treating female mental illness (sexuality) by regulating the menstrual cycle. The symptoms from which she suffers are blatantly sexual and blood related. Blood loss is a significant indicator of menstruation and her lethargy and heavy sleep is, as Bruno Bettelheim notes, symptomatic of puberty. According to Bettelheim in his work on fairy tales, 'During the months before the first menstruation, and often also for some time immediately following it, girls are passive, seem sleepy, and withdraw into themselves.'(20) Perhaps more relevant and more than likely known to Stoker in the 1890s, however, is the work of Dr. Edward Tilt, who documented numerous case studies of what he called Pseudo-Narcotism in a number of his menstrual patients. He describes Pseudo-Narcotism as

A great tendency to sleep, an uneasy sensation of weight in the head, a feeling as if a cloud or a cobweb required to be brushed from the brain, disinclination for any exertion, a diminution in the memory and in the powers of the mind. (21)

Furthermore, he describes Pseudo-Narcotism as 'very intense when the menstrual flow is either very painful, deficient, or completely absent.' His case study no.25 bears a striking resemblance to the description of Lucy's physical health subsequent to her attacks from Count Dracula. The patient is described as of a

delicate complexion, drowsy look, and when roused, looks as if she expected to see something dreadful [...] She sleeps all night, wakes unrefreshed, often falls asleep during the day; some times feels stunned, and loses her senses for an hour. (22)

He also quotes the case of a patient who ‘at menstrual periods, could almost sleep while walking, and once remained sixteen hours in a state of stupor, from which she awoke quite well.’(23) Another patient ‘at menstrual periods, would remain for hours in what she called her ‘quiet fit’, a state of self-absorption, unaccompanied by hysterical phenomena, or by convulsions.’(24)

Lucy’s burgeoning sexuality, in conjunction with her prior thinking on sexual mores and behaviour, is opposed to and threatens the established sexual politics of the day. In no uncertain terms, Lucy must be appropriated into the fold of Victorian womanhood or if not face total annihilation of the self. Stoker’s Lucy is at a defining point in sexual development, the influence of the moon and the arrival of Dracula is an embodiment of menstruation and the maturation of female sexuality. Showalter, further, makes the point that

Although a relatively small percentage of women patients were committed to asylums during their adolescent years, doctors regarded puberty as one of the most psychologically dangerous periods of the female life-cycle. Doctors argued that the menstrual discharge in itself predisposed women to insanity. Either an abnormal quantity or quality of the blood, according to this theory could effect the brain; thus psychiatric physicians attempted to control the blood by diet and venesection. Late, irregular, or ‘suppressed’ menstruation was regarded as a dangerous condition and was treated with purgatives, forcing medicines, hip baths, and leeches applied to the thighs. (25)

Specific examples again from Dr Edward Tilt include instructions that

[The] labia should be fomented every two of three hours with a lotion containing half an ounce of acetate of lead, and two drachms of laudanum to four ounces of distilled water [...] A tepid bath or hip bath, should be taken daily, or every other day, warm water being added, so that the patient may remain in it for an hour, or more if possible. After the full effect of a saline purgative, a sedative rectal injection should be given once or twice a day. (26)

Other notable examples involving purgation, as Showalter has noted, include the leeching of the labia, described by Tilt in case no. 42, whereby, leeches were applied frequently to the labia of a young patient to induce menstruation. Much medical advice and cures for anaemia in the nineteenth century often verged on the macabre. One suggested remedy for anaemia recommended to women was to ingest a daily cup of oxen blood. It was reasoned that what better way to strengthen one’s blood than to drink the blood of another, not however human blood, but the blood a strong animal. In consequence, abattoirs began to attract ‘blood drinkers’ – anaemics who came to drink a daily cup of blood. This medical trend is recorded in the literature and art of the day. Rachilde (the pseudonym of

Marguerite Eymery-Vallette), a French writer, penned a short story 'The Blood Drinker' in 1900 which explored themes of the Eternal Feminine, blood-lust and the degenerative affect of female sexuality alongside contemporary medical cures for anaemia. Dijkstra surmises:

Rachilde, in her emphatically symbolist story 'The Blood Drinker,' positions herself in the interstices between the reality of the late nineteenth-century cures and the psychological fascination of her contemporaries for the notion of the bestial vampire woman. Her blood drinker is none other than the moon – the feminine principle – beamed in upon herself in 'the eternal desperation of her own nothingness.' (27)

The trend for blood-drinking was also captured in a painting by Ferdinand Gueldry exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français in 1798. The painting caused a sensation and a review in *The Magazine of Art* reported that

One of the most popular pictures of the year is undoubtedly Monsieur Gueldry's gorge raising representation of *The Blood-Drinkers*. In which a group of consumptive invalids, congregated in a shambles, are drinking the blood fresh from the newly-slain ox lying in the foreground – blood that oozes out over the floor – while the slaughterers themselves, steeped in gore, hand out the glasses like the women at the wells. What gives point to the loathsomeness of the subject is the figure of one young girl, pale and trembling, who turns from the scene in sickening disgust, and so accentuates our own. (28)

The cultural visibility of horrific and gruesome solutions for anaemia only fuelled the period's preoccupation with the degeneracy of women. Consequentially, it is by no means a huge leap to acknowledge how paintings and short stories recounting such practices served to promote suspicions that vampires actually existed, especially vampire women. The blood transfusions in Stoker's novel can, thus, be read as either a morbid example of a cure for anaemia, or, as an attempt to regulate the menstrual cycle. A further possibility suggests that the transfusions act as a type of reverse menstruation. Van Helsing and his band of morally upstanding specimens of Victorian manhood appropriate menstruation through repeated blood donations (periodic loss of blood) and so too begin to exhibit symptoms similar to Lucy's. Yet for the sake of Victorian womanhood, they continue in their weakened state to replace the blood she loses during her nightly visits from Dracula. The replacement of blood can also be read as an attempt to halt or delay menstruation, a method which was widely promoted in Victorian society. Showalter once again referring to Dr Edward Tilt notes that

Menstruation was so disruptive to the female brain that it should not be hastened but rather be retarded as long as possible, and he advised mothers to prevent menarche by ensuring that their teen-age daughters remained in the nursery, took cold shower baths, avoided feather beds and novels, eliminated meat from their diets, and wore drawers. Delayed menstruation,

he insisted, was ‘the principal cause of the pre-eminence of English women, in vigour of constitution and soundness of judgement, and ... rectitude of moral principal.’ (29)

However, when most attempts to regulate and bring female sexuality under control had been exhausted, all that remained was the final frontier in treatments, clitoridectomy. It was first conceived as a treatment by Dr. Isaac Baker Brown, who practiced the operation on women in his private London clinic for seven years between 1859 and 1866. Brown was convinced that female masturbation was responsible for female madness and recommended the removal of the clitoris, if not the labia, as a cure. According to Showalter:

As he became more confident, he operated on patients as young as ten, on idiots, epileptics, paralytics, even on women with eye problems. He operated five times on women whose madness consisted of their wish to take advantage of the new Divorce Act of 1857, and found in each case that his patient returned humbly to her husband. In no case, Brown claimed, was he so certain of a cure as in nymphomania, for he had never seen a recurrence of the disease after surgery. (30)

Van Helsing, Dr Seward, Arthur Holmwood and Quincy Morris fail in their attempts to prevent Lucy from changing into a nymphomaniac, blood-fiend whose sweetness has turned to ‘adamantine, heartless cruelty, and purity to voluptuous wantonness.’ (31) Therefore, as in the treatment of incurable insanity in Victorian women, Lucy finally succumbs to the most horrific and nightmarish of ends. She is staked and beheaded:

Arthur took the stake and the hammer, and when once his mind was set on action his hands never trembled nor even quivered. Van Helsing opened his missal and began to read, and Quincy and I followed as well as we could. Arthur placed the point over the heart, and as I looked I could see its dint in the white flesh. Then he struck with all his might. The Thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips (labia/ clitoris perhaps). The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it. His face was set, and high duty seemed to shine through it; the sight of it gave us courage, so that our voices seemed to ring through the little vault. And then the writhing and quivering of the body became less, and the teeth ceased to champ, and the face to quiver. Finally it lay still. The terrible task was over ... Arthur bent and kissed her, and then we sent him and Quincey out of the tomb; the Professor and I sawed the top off the stake leaving the point of it in the body. Then we cut off the head and filled the mouth with garlic. We soldered up the leaden coffin, screwed on the coffin-lid, and gathering up our belongings came away. When the Professor locked the door he gave the key to Arthur. (32)

The critic Darryl Jones describes the power and imagery of the scene as

[...] one of traditional masculinity, the god Thor with his mighty hammer, and the tableau is that of a violent gang-rape. (33)

I agree with his interpretation of this scene but would expand upon the metaphor of rape. Rape is both a violation and a play of power, and can metaphorically be extended to include more covert forms of control over the female body. On a broader cultural platform, I would suggest that in the case of Lucy Westenra, her staking and beheading is an example of clitoridectomy. References to the lips (labia), heart and head (clitoris) to the stuffing of her mouth with garlic (closing the vagina) are analogous to barbaric treatments prescribed to cure 'female insanity'. This can also be applied to vampire films where the most visually disturbing and lasting image is generally the staking and beheading of the female vampire. The scene in Hammer's *Dracula - Prince of Darkness* (1966) where Helen (the wanton female vampire) is staked through the heart by a priest on what can only be described as a sacrificial altar, is both shocking and unsettling. Even more terrifying is the post-staking image of docility and serenity where Helen, like Stoker's Lucy, is violated into submission.

As I have already demonstrated vampires in literature revolve around the motifs of the moon and blood. In addition, the moon compels the blood-parched figure of the vampire to blood-drinking or, in other words, initiates puberty, menstruation and a sexual appetite which demands to be sated. The novel itself, perhaps merely by coincidence, gives further credence to this argument by including a blatant symbol of female sexuality. Dracula arrives in Whitby on a boat called the *Demeter*. According to Barbara Belford in her biography of Bram Stoker, on a visit to the lighthouse at Whitby he was told about the *Dmitry*:

a Russian Brigantine out of the port of Narva, ballasted with silver sand from the Danube – which ran aground on October 24, 1885. At the library Stoker read the *Whitby Gazette*'s report of the event [...] (34)

Thus, it is established that Stoker's change of the ship's name was a conscious decision. It is also more than credible to assume that Stoker was knowledgeable of the Classical Greek Goddess Demeter and what she signified. The definition of Demeter given by Barbara G. Walker is as follows:

Greek meter is 'mother'. De is the delta, or triangle, a female genital sign know as 'the letter of the vulva' in the Greek sacred alphabet, as in India it was Yoni Yantra, or yantra of the vulva. Corresponding letters – Sanskrit *dwr*, Celtic *duir*, Hebrew *daleth* – meant the Door of birth, death, or the sexual paradise. Thus, Demeter was what Asia called 'the Doorway of the Mysterious Feminine ... the root from which Heaven and Earth Sprang'. (35)

The implications of Count Dracula's arrival into Whitby on a ship called the Demeter are manifold. Firstly, it reinforces the argument that the figure of the vampire is essentially feminized (an embodiment of female sexuality and menstrual blood). The whole scene, including the harbour and the convulsing waves suggest the spasming walls of the uterus prior to menstruation:

Then without warning the tempest broke. With a rapidity which, at the time, seemed incredible, and even afterwards is impossible to realise, the whole aspect of nature at once became convulsed. The waves rose in growing fury, each overtopping its fellow, till in a very few minutes the lately glassy sea was like a roaring and devouring monster. (36)

The Demeter, a symbol of the female genitals, contracting in a spasmic sea, expels Dracula onto the shores of Whitby. Boundaries, both social and physical, are breached as he is bled and birthed from the Demeter. At this point Dracula is menstrual bleeding, infective and invasive, inciting female sexuality. The infection of his victims when it does not involve death is the giving of life, immortality in the realm of the undead. Similarly, puberty is a rebirth, a metamorphosis from one stage of sexual development to the next and the arrival of the vampire is 'usually expressed with the juxtaposition of repressed with uncontrollable sexuality.'(37) Furthermore, the vampire has been described as 'A perfect embodiment of eros and thanatos, an archetype of the unconscious whose coming augers all manner of erotic deliria. Dracula's female victims become deranged psycho-sexual cannibals.'(38)

The significance of the Demeter also reverberates in the nightmarish quality of Dracula's nightly visits to his victims. As Walker points out in her explanation and history of the term 'Demeter' like the majority of Asiatic Goddesses in their oldest forms, Demeter was a triadic figure appearing as Virgin, Mother and Crone, or Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. One aspect of her crone phase is echoed in the legendary medieval Night-Mare. (39) Walker elaborates

The legendary medieval Night-Mare – and equine Fury who tormented sinners in their sleep was based on ancient images of a Mare-headed Demeter. (40)

The equine association of the nightmare is also explored by Ernest Jones in his work entitled *On the Nightmare*. After exhausting the etymological origin of the term nightmare, he argues:

The present point is this. It might readily be supposed that the assimilation of the second half of the word Nightmare to the English word for a female horse, a mare, is a matter of no special significance. But psycho-analysis has with right become suspicious of manifestations of the human spirit that are easily discarded as meaningless, and in the present case our suspicions are strengthened when we learn that in other countries the ideas of night-hag and female horse are closely associated, although there is not the linguistic justification for it that exists in English. (41)

Furthermore, Jones draws a link between the horse and the vulva which reinforces the connection between Demeter, the horse, and the nightmare. Giving examples of horses and women he quotes an old Prussian saying ‘If the bridegroom comes on horseback to the wedding one should loosen the saddle girth as soon as he dismounts, for this ensures his future wife an easy childbirth.’(42)

The footnote attached to this anecdote explains that this ‘symbolic equating of the horse’s saddle-girth and harness with the female vulva is commonly met with in folklore.’ (43)

Thus, the female horse or mare, her saddle and girth, like the Demeter, has a symbolism located in the female genitals, specifically indicating the vulva.

This connection, whether, emanating from the psyche, or else, an example of folkloric memory, is further evidenced in the Victorian preoccupation with the figure of the ‘Fallen Woman’. The Fallen Woman in Victorian art and literature generally denotes the prostitute or the woman who has fallen prey to her sexual appetites. Her fall is frequently connected with horses. The critic Nina Auerbach refers to ‘the symbolic use of horses in novels about fallen women from three different countries’(44) referencing Leo Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*, Émile Zola’s *Nana* and George Moore’s *Esther Waters*. According to Auerbach, ‘In their sensuous celebrations of triumphant horses both Tolstoy and Zola commemorate their heroines’ animality and the poignant glamour of its fall.’(45) The most famous example of the Fallen Woman and her association with horses in British literature, however, has to be, Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*. The eponymous heroine’s fall is precipitated by the death of the family horse and perhaps the most sexually charged moment in the novel occurs while she is being driven in a horse drawn cart to Tantridge by Alec D’Urberville, furthermore, her eventual sexual encounter (or fall) with Alec is preceded by a journey on horseback. Thus, Stoker’s naming of the ship the ‘Demeter’ connotes varying aspects of female sexuality. Vampirism, nightmares and horses meet at a point of cathexis denoting female sexuality, sexual appetite, and sexual transgression. As such, Lucy in Stoker’s *Dracula* can also be categorized as an example of the fallen woman who has transgressed the codes of accepted morality. Finally, it is impossible to ignore the potential influence of Henry Fuseli’s painting *The Nightmare* (1781), depicting a supine woman oppressed by a ghoulish incubus-type demon who squats profanely upon her chest, while a wild-eyed horse glares on. The link between horses and sexuality here is explicit. I would also go as far as to suggest that Stoker’s scene of the Demeter entering Whitby Harbour and Lucy’s same night sleepwalking episode with its inference of an incubus type sexual encounter replicates Fuseli’s painting.

It is also notable that the birth and development of psychoanalysis as a field of study more or less coincided with developments and advances in psychiatry, obstetrics and gynaecology. Auerbach notes that

Stoker might conceivably have known of Freud’s work. In 1893 F.W.H. Myers reported enthusiastically on Breuer and Freud’s ‘Preliminary Communication’ to *Studies on*

Hysteria at a general meeting of the Society for Psychical Research in London. Stoker's alienist, Dr Seward, indefatigably recording bizarre manifestations of vampirism, mentions the mesmerist Charcot, Freud's early teacher; Dr. Seward's relentless attempt to make sense of his patient Renfield's 'zoophagy' is a weird forecast of the later Freud rationalizing the obsessions of his Wolf Man and Rat Man. Seward's meticulous case histories of Renfield, Lucy, and Dracula's other victims introduce into the Gothic genre a form that Freud would raise to a novelistic art; his anguished clinician's record makes Lucy both the early heroine of a case history and an ineffable romantic image of fin-de-siècle womanhood. (46)

The characteristic symptoms described by victims after a night-visit from a vampire correlate with similar descriptions of the nightmare. Ernest Jones, Freud's disciple, describes the three cardinal features of a typical nightmare as

(1) agonizing dread; (2) a suffocating sense of oppression at the chest; and (3) a conviction of helpless paralysis. Less conspicuous features are an outbreak of cold sweat, convulsive palpitation of the heart, and sometimes a flow of seminal or vaginal secretion or even a paralysis of the sphincters. (47)

Lucy Westenra's first encounter with Dracula is most definitely depicted as nightmarish. In a supine position, the most common posture of a nightmare sufferer, she is described as having

Her lips parted, and she was breathing – not softly, as usual with her, but in long, heavy gasps, as though striving to get her lungs full at every breath. As I came close, she put up her hand in her slip and pulled the collar of her nightdress close round her throat. Whilst she did so there came a little shudder through her, as though she felt the cold. I flung the warm shawl over her, and drew the edges tight round her neck, for I dreaded lest she should get some deadly chill from the night air, unclad as she was. (48)

According to Jones, the latent content of the nightmare consists of a representation of a normal act of sexual intercourse. He describes the exaggerated symptoms exhibited by sufferers of the nightmare as indicative of those experienced in some degree when fear of coitus is present. He also observed the prevalence of the nightmare amongst pre-menstrual women. He describes the case history of a young lady of about fifteen who was

Seiz'd with a fit of this Disease, and groan'd so miserably that she awoke her Father, who was sleeping in the next room. He arose, ran into her chamber, and found her lying on her Back, and the Blood gushing plentifully out of her Mouth and Nose. When he shook her, she recover'd and told him, that she thought some great ceremony, stretched himself upon her. (sic) She had heard moaning in sleep several nights before; but, the next day after she

imagin'd herself oppress'd by that Man, she had a copious eruption of the Menses, which, for that time, remov'd all her complaints. (49)

Jones interprets the occurrence as the coming to pass of what she both dreads and desires. He also makes the point that erotic feeling is in most cases more ardent in the days preceding the catamenial period, giving the following example:

A robust servant Girl, about eighteen years old, was severely oppress'd with the Nightmare, two or three nights before every eruption of the Menses, and used to groan so loudly as to awake her Fellow-servant, who always shook or turn'd her on her Side; by which means she recover'd. She was thus afflicted periodically with it, 'till she took a bed-fellow of a different sex and bore Children. (50)

In his appraisal of the occurrence of nightmares prior to the menses, he concludes that these examples arise during a time when 'Paracelsus stated that the menstrual flux engendered phantoms in the air and that therefore convents were seminaries of nightmares.' (51)

Or, finally to quote from the eminent Victorian sexologist, Richard Von Krafft-Ebing, who in his work, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, reports the case of a married man who presents himself with cuts on his arm. When questioned as to the origins of the marks, he responded:

When he wished to approach his wife, who was young and somewhat 'nervous', he first had to make a cut on his arm. Then she would suck the wound and during the act become violently excited sexually. (52)

Nineteenth-century macabre, barbaric and often downright ludicrous pseudo-science served to construct female sexuality and sexual desire as diabolical and vampiric. Overall, Lucy's transformation into a bloodthirsty vampire reifies a case study in the simultaneously, medical, gynaecological, psychiatric and psychoanalytic practice of menstrual pathologising and its concomitant control and suppression of female sexuality.

1. Marie Mulvey-Roberts, 'Menstrual Misogyny and Taboo: The Medusa, Vampire, and the Female Stigmatic' in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, ed., *Menstruation A Cultural History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.159.
2. Lynn Pykett, *The 'Improper' Feminine: The Woman's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing*, (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.137-138.
3. *ibid.*, p.140.
4. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: From the Greeks to Freud* (London: Harvard, University Press, 1990), p.5.
5. *ibid.*, p.11.
6. *ibid.*, p.217.
7. English translation: *Treatise on menstruation and its relationship to ovulation, fertility, hygiene at puberty and the critical age, its role in different illnesses and its symptoms and treatment.*
8. Adam Raciborski, quoted in Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: From the Greeks to Freud*, p.220.
9. Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.305.
10. *ibid.*, p.309.
11. Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1979), pp.165-166.
12. Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove, *The Wise Wound: Menstruation and Everywoman*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), pp.263-264.
13. Source: Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopaedia of Myths and Secrets*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), pp.642-644.
14. Marie Mulvey-Roberts, 'Dracula and the Doctors: Bad Blood, Menstrual Taboo and the New Woman' in William Hughes and Andrew Smith, ed., *Bram Stoker: History, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p.78.
15. Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), p.100.
16. *ibid.*, p.67.

17. *ibid.*, p.120.
18. *ibid.*, 121-122.
19. Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*, (London: Virago, 1987), p.74.
20. Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p.225.
21. Edward Tilt, *The Change of Life in Health and Disease: A Practical Treatise on the Nervous and Other Afflictions Incidental to Women at the Decline of Life*, (London: John Churchill and Sons, 1870), p.199.
22. *ibid.*, pp.197-168.
23. *ibid.* pp.168-169.
24. *ibid.* p.169.
25. Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p.56.
26. Edward Tilt, *The Change of Life in Health and Disease*, p.238.
27. Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, p.338.
28. *ibid.*, p.338.
29. Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p.75.
30. *ibid.*, p.76.
31. Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, p.225.
32. *ibid.*, pp.230-232.
33. Darryl Jones, *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film*, (London: Arnold, 2002), p.88.
34. Barbara Belford, *Bram Stoker: A Biography of the Author of Dracula*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996), p.222.

35. Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopaedia of Myths and Secrets*, p.218.
36. Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, pp.86-87.
37. Allen Eyles, Robert Adkinson and Nicholas Fry, ed., *The House of Horror: The Complete Story of Hammer Films*, (London: Lorrimer, 1981), p.95.
38. *ibid.*, p.95.
39. The Oxford Classical Dictionary gives the following definition: 'In Arcadia Demeter was worshipped with Poseidon. The Black Demeter of Phigaleia and Demeter Erinys of Thelpusa were both said to have taken the form of a mare and to have been mated with Poseidon in Horse shape, and at Phigaleia she was shown as horse-headed.' Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth ed., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University, 2003), p.448.
40. Walker, Barbara G., *The Woman's Encyclopaedia of Myths and Secrets*, p.218.
41. Ernest Jones, *On the Nightmare*, (London: L. & Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press, and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1931), p.247.
42. *ibid.*, pp.249-245.
43. *ibid.*, p.249.
44. Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p.178.
45. *ibid.*, p.179.
46. *ibid.*, p.23.
47. Ernest Jones, *On the Nightmare*, p.75.
48. Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, p.102.
49. Ernest Jones, *On the Nightmare*, p.45.
50. *ibid.*, p.45.
51. *ibid.*, p.45.

52. Richard Von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, (London: Staples Press, 1965), p.85.

List of Illustrations:

Fig.1 Ferdinand Knopff, *Istar* (1888), in Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.309.

Fig.2 Ferdinand Gueldry, *The Blood Drinkers* (1898), in Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.338.

Fig.3 Barbara Shelley in *Dracula – Prince of Darkness*, dir. Terence Fisher, (1966)

Fig.4 Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare* (1781), in Jean Marigny, *Vampires: The World of the Undead*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), p.64.