

Abstract

The vampire has long been a subject of popular imagination because of its existence in the cultural paradigm of all ancient civilization. Such all-pervasive influence problematizes the origin of the legend, which culminated in the image of Count Dracula in Bram Stoker's masterpiece *Dracula* (1897). The character of Count Dracula not only marks the culminating point of evolution of the vampire for the last ten centuries, but also emerges as the most popular and influential vampire figure in his manifestation of dissidence, non-conformity with, and interrogation and subversion of heteronormative codes of sexuality prevalent since the Enlightenment in Europe in the eighteenth century.

The journey of the vampire, however, did not come to an end with the publication of *Dracula* (1897). Rather, the text opened up new possibilities and dimensions in the presentation of the myth by virtue of its appropriation by heteronormativity in the twenty first century. Such appropriation of the vampire myth by heteronormativity yields to the birth of a new male vampire; suave, handsome, sophisticated and conformist to suit the agenda of heteronormativity to assert its hegemonic control over the masses by exploiting the favourite icons of popular culture in Europe and the United States of America. The purpose of my dissertation is to record the transformation of the vampire from the subversive and monstrous figure of Count Dracula in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) to the conformist and charming character of Edward Cullen in Stephenie Meyer's the *Twilight Saga* (2005-2008).

The origin of the vampire, as I have stated above, seems to be problematic because of its presence in different forms in different cultures of ancient civilizations in India, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece and Slavic folklore. My primary endeavour in this dissertation is to locate the myth in a specific cultural context and to show the migration of it to Europe by undertaking a chronological development of the vampire myth in course of history. My research in this dissertation has shown Indian vampiric figures as one of the potential predecessors of Count Dracula by attempting an intertextual study of the Hindu and the Buddhist theological doctrines and literary texts and *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker. The intertextual study of the Indian texts consists of vampiric figures and motifs and Stoker's text reveals the historical possibility of the migration of the vampiric myth from India to Eastern Europe through central Asia via the historical Silk Route in the thirteenth century.

The two principal questions that my dissertation attempts to explore are the interrogation and subversion of heteronormativity in the vampire narrative of Britain, written in nineteenth century and the reassertion of heteronormativity in the vampire narrative of the United States of America in late twentieth and early twenty first centuries. Following a brief survey of Gothic novels written in Britain in the eighteenth century, my dissertation primarily concentrates on Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), to show the elements of subversion of heteronormative codes of sexuality embedded in the vampire narrative.

This dissertation makes a survey of the social milieu of the Victorian period in Britain in order to explore the paradigm of heteronormativity. I consider the legal, academic and medical discourse of the Victorian period and find the dominance of heteronormativity in the codification, regulation and surveillance on sexuality of the individual. I primarily follow the theoretical outline of Michel Foucault, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler to show how heterosexual monogamy was established as the only sanctioned form of sexuality and all other forms of sexuality beyond the parameter of heteronormativity were marginalized and subjected to repression and vigilance. Moreover, my dissertation studies the medical treatises on conjugal life of a married couple, fertility and childbirth to show how family and procreation share an integral relationship with the system of production and uninterrupted supply of human labour in large scale industries.

The study of the formation of heteronormativity in Victorian England shows its implication of prohibition and repression of non-normative sexual practices such as homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, necrophilia etc. As a result, the repressed sexuality acquires bizarre, strange, monstrous forms in Victorian fiction. My dissertation follows Freudian assumptions concerning monstrosity to prove this point. I have chosen Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) as my primary text to show the repressed sexuality as monstrous and subversive, because this text marks the culmination of the literary trend of subversion of non-normative sexuality in many ways.

My dissertation demonstrates Victorian anxiety concerning vampirism manifested in *Dracula* (1897). In his display of non-normative sexuality, Count Dracula seems to pose a serious challenge to heteronormativity like his predecessors in Gothic fiction. However, the challenged posed by Count Dracula appears to be more threatening than his predecessors in Gothic fiction as he not only transgresses the limit of heteronormativity, but also overreaches boundaries of the Gothic by the displacement of non-normative sexuality from the margin to the centre.

In his manifestation of homoeroticism, sexual orgy, polygamy and geriatric sexuality, Count Dracula seems to present non-normative sexuality as an alternative institution to heteronormativity. His invasion into London, the heart of modernity in Europe in the nineteenth century implies a displacement, a reorientation of the map of sexuality in Europe. This dissertation studies this displacement of non-normative sexuality and its endeavour to thwart the temporal and the spatial categorization of sexuality by heteronormativity. I study this displacement in the light of the Foucaultian assumption of heterotopia. The fear of displacement entails Victorian anxiety concerning the vulnerability of the administrative personnel to the temptation of the ‘polluting’ nature of oriental sexual practices, manifested in the implementation of various colonial acts regulating the code of conduct of the British officials posted in colonies in Asia and Africa. However, this dissertation records the anticipation of the appropriation of the vampire narrative by heteronormativity in a subtle manner, implicated in Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897).

The vampire narrative witnesses a resurgence of popular interest and critical introspection in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries. The resurgence springs from the adaptations of *Dracula* (1897) in print and on screen by the writers and directors working on vampire stories from different literary and ideological perspectives. This trend of new adaptation and reorientation of the vampire culminates in the metamorphosis of the bizarre, monstrous and subversive vampire of the nineteenth century into the suave, sexually desirable, conformist male vampires in fiction and film in the United States of America. This metamorphosis of the vampire parallels the advent of metrosexuality manifested in the realms of sports, popular culture such as music, cinema, advertising, fashion and popular literature such as comic books for children and tales of superheroes.

The research question in this part of my dissertation, is the reassertion of heteronormativity in vampire narratives. My dissertation records the process of the reassertion of heteronormativity in the vampire narratives produced in the United States of America by studying the character of the protagonists of vampire fiction and their appearance on screen in context of the emergence of metrosexuality in Europe and the United States of America. I look at novels and movies based on the vampire such as the novel *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) by Anne Rice and its adaptation in a movie with the same title (1994), directed by Neil Jordan, the movie *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1992), directed by Fran Rubel Kuzui, the web series *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017), created by L. J. Smith and developed by Cavin Williamson and Julie Plec, the series of novels *The Twilight Saga* (2005-2008) consisting of four novels: *Twilight*

(2005), *New Moon* (2006), *Eclipse* (2007) and *Breaking Dawn* (2008) by Stephenie Meyer and the adaptation of the first three novels in films with the same names in 2008, 2009, 2010 respectively and *Breaking Dawn* (Part 1) in 2011 and *Breaking Dawn* (Part 2) in 2012.

My dissertation follows the theoretical outline of R. W. Connell in *Masculinities* (1995) and shows how the metrosexual vampire heroes ironically valorise hegemonic masculinity and conform with heteronormativity. The study shows the appropriation and familiarisation of the vampire by heteronormativity.

This dissertation studies the journey of the vampire from Britain to the United States of America over the period of more than a century. This journey not only shows the metamorphosis of an ancient myth, but also the shifting paradigm of sexuality and masculinity as well rendering the inexhaustive charm of the vampire over centuries.