

**An Analysis of the Female Vampire According to Male-Created Stereotypes in  
Selected Films**

By

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Keelan Smillie

Name of Student

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research paper, titled 'An Analysis of the Female Vampire According to Male Stereotypes in Selected Films' investigates how the portrayal of the female vampire is phallogentric. Phallogentrism is the ideology that the phallus, the male sexual organ, is the centre of the social world. Feminist theories such as the monstrous-feminine, 'male gaze' and the femme fatale juxtaposed by the maiden archetype discuss the portrayal of women in film. The feminist discussion of female characters can be extended to the female vampire that is often sexualised in films. Feminist theory, which deals with binary thinking, and male stereotypes are applied to the case studies. The analysis of the modern female vampire in films according to feminist concepts will demonstrate that the female vampire is stereotyped as the femme fatale or the maiden.

## **KEYWORDS**

Vampire

Feminism

The male gaze

The monstrous-feminine

Binary oppositions

Stereotypes

Femme fatale

Maiden

Semiotics

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. RESEARCH QUESTION

The female vampire has existed throughout literature and has inspired other interpretations of the female vampire in films (Riddle 2020:15). It could be argued that the female vampire has not developed much from her initial depiction in Victorian literature (Vogel 2011:1-2). The female vampire is portrayed as a monster with an appetite for human blood and a prowess to sensually subdue her prey (Kristeva 1981:33). The female vampire, since her origins in Victorian literature, is sexualised and objectified. Even now in films, she is stereotyped. As such, she has been confined to stereotypes such as being the femme fatale, the whore, and the passive character. The female vampire, even in recent vampire films, is confined to this stereotype and has had little to no development in films. This paper investigates how the portrayal of the vampire conforms to male stereotypes.

### 1.2. RELATED SUB-PROBLEMS

This study focuses on the portrayal of the female vampire in film, however, there are related sub-problems that tie into the research that will be addressed:

- Background overview of the female vampire in the *Twilight saga* (2008-2012) and *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992).
- What is the stereotypical female vampire?
- To what extent has the role of the male gaze influenced the construction of the filmic female vampire?
- How is the female vampire framed in films?

### 1.3. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The notion of the vampire originated from Victorian literature (1837-1901) in a time when women were very conservative, virtuous, and in traditional marital relationships (Riddle 2020:78). The virtuous virginal, good-girl figure is juxtaposed to the femme fatale (Smith 2015: 19) and the female vampire juxtaposed the human woman (Vogel

2011:4). Compared to the 1800s sexuality and gender have been explored and embraced, yet the female vampire is still predominantly subjected to male-created stereotypes and portrayed as a flat character that lacks nuance and agency (Fishelov 1990:426).

Vampires in films and newer literary pieces either conform to the quintessential vampire that had been established in older literature or reject that design deliberately<sup>1</sup> (Riddle 2020:80). The female vampire was designed to be a sexually charged creature of darkness whereas the male vampire was designed to steal away unavailable women. From this depiction, the stereotype has remained in various vampire films with the female vampire became possessed by great sexuality after they are turned into a vampire. The female vampire displays her sexuality and is sexually charged making her a desired sexual object by the male audience (Mulvey 1975:809). Laura Mulvey's 'male gaze' (1975:809) in cinema showcases how the female vampire now is subjected to being sexualised and objectified in films as women were in early cinema.

The relationship between the male vampire and the female vampire is patriarchal. Female/male or feminine/masculine are binary oppositions (Moi 1997:124) where the male is active, and the female is passive, positioning the female figure below the male figure. The idea of masculinity being dominant and femininity being passive is a concept created by the patriarchy (Moi 1997:118) to remain dominant and retain control of women in society. In many films the male vampire is dominant and the female vampire is submissive. Either woman is passive, or she does not exist (Moi 1997:125). A woman who is passive in her sexuality is an innocent victim and a woman who is active in her sexuality is a gory vampire (Vogel 2011:4). This patriarchal design has contributed to confining the female vampire to male-created stereotypes.

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<sup>1</sup> A vampire that does not share similar troupes to the vampire Dracula (1897) or the vampire Carmilla (1872).



#### 1.4. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The female vampire is stereotyped as the femme fatale, virgin/whore and active/passive object. The 'male gaze' is responsible for the sexualisation of the female vampire in films and the lack of a female director and camera operator results in the objectified female vampire in films. The female vampire should exist outside the stereotypes and represent the liberated woman without the consequence of death and not being confined to the stereotypical sexualised and objectified character. The female vampire has evolved little, if at all, and is still being portrayed as stereotypically beautiful, sexy, evil, and powerful to achieve profit for the film<sup>2</sup>. Analysing vampire films will aid this investigation into how the portrayal of the vampire conforms to male-created stereotypes.

The female vampire has existed for 150 years and remains predominantly as an evil, sexualized, and objectified female monster in films. The female vampire, even in recent vampire films, is confined to this stereotype and had little to no development from her predecessors. The monstrous-feminine potentially can become transgressive and empowering (Smith 2020:10) through being monstrous, powerful and being a well-rounded character. However, the female vampire as the monstrous-feminine has remained as a sexualised and objectified character. The female vampire should be liberated from their stereotypical constraints, not serving anyone and not being objectified according to the male desire. This paper is investigating how the portrayal of the vampire conforms to the male-created stereotypes of the femme fatale and the maiden.

#### 1.5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This research aims to investigate and explore the portrayal of the stereotypical female vampire in films and assess how the portrayal of the vampire conforms to the male-created stereotypes of the femme fatale and the maiden. The objective is a guide for the research to follow. Each point will be explored in the chapters to follow.

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<sup>2</sup> Paradoxical Effects of Sexualization in Advertising on Product Attractiveness and Purchase Intentions. *Sex Roles* (2021)

- An overview of the background of the female vampire.
- Discussing the female vampire stereotypes and the theories relating to them.
- Applying the theories discussed to the traditional female vampire and the modern female vampire.
- Discussing the female vampire within the accompanying practical study.
- Conclude the research and summarise findings.

## 1.6. PRELIMINARY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To investigate and explore the female vampire effectively enough to answer the research question there will be a need for texts and sources that focus on Phallocentrism, binary thinking, feminism, stereotypes and an overview of the female vampire. Using these theories and ideas and applying them to the case studies will aid in answering the research question. The purpose of these ideas and theories is to discuss the stereotypes such as, but not limited to, the femme fatale, virgin/whore and active/passive object. This section will argue that the moment the female character becomes active (instead of being passive), she is dangerous and becomes the monstrous feminine. These theories and ideas will be applied to selected vampire films in order to answer how the portrayal of the vampire conforms to male-created stereotypes.

### 1.6.1. A BRIEF BACKGROUND ON THE FEMALE VAMPIRE AS SEXUAL OBJECT

A brief background on the female vampire will aid in proving that the female vampire is confined to stereotypes and lacks agency and character development. Eric W. Riddle explains that vampires in films and newer literary pieces either conform to the quintessential vampire that had been established in older literature or reject that design deliberately (2020:80) to create a different kind of vampire. Kathrin Vogel states that the sexual desire that accompanies the female vampire has been a way of luring a victim into a trap (2011:16). In conclusion, the female's background is based on the quintessential vampire whose sexual appeal is part of her nature.

### 1.6.2. DEATH-DEALING BINARY PERCEPTION

In Toril Moi's essay *Feminist, Female, Feminine* (1997), she explains how Hélène Cixous "has contributed a valuable discussion of the consequences of what she calls death-dealing binary thought" (1997:124). This binary thought centres on the masculine/feminine and the male/female role in society. "These binary oppositions are heavily imbricated in the patriarchal value system (1997:124)" and conform women into stereotypes in films. Laura Mulvey's essay *Visual Pleasure* (1975) explains how cinema is regarded as patriarchal. Serving the male narrative by featuring the self-assured male protagonist for the male audience (1975:810). Binary oppositions consist of the female/male or feminine/masculine (Moi 1997: 124) where the male is active, and the female is passive. The male is dominant and active, whereas the female is submissive and passive, which is a concept created by the patriarchy (Moi 1997:118). Moi states that either woman is passive, or she does not exist (1997:125). This paper is investigating how the portrayal of the vampire conforms to male-created stereotypes.

### 1.6.3. STEREOTYPES

The stereotypical portrayal of the female vampire is the product of the male spectator. The character of the female vampire is predominantly flat, only consisting of one notable characteristic, which is why she is stereotyped. The female vampire is often written as the femme fatale, featuring the fatal woman or the fatal wife (Smith 2015: 2) and operates according to binary thinking and juxtaposes the maiden, also known as the virgin. How femme fatale is negative and is juxtaposed to the positive virginal, maiden figure (Smith 2015: 19) is mirrored in how the female vampire is juxtaposed to her prior human self. The fangs on both the female vampire and the male vampire represent the phallus which frames the male vampire as castrati with sexual impotence (Worley 1989:25-27). These stereotypes of the femme fatale, whore/virgin are applied to the female vampire in films.

#### 1.6.4. THE MALE GAZE

Laura Mulvey's 'male gaze' (1975:809) in cinema showcases how women are subjected to being sexualised and objectified in films. The position of women as being a source of pleasure in film starts from the male director to the male spectator. This pleasure of looking is scopophilia (Mulvey 1975:806) and men receive this type of cinematic pleasure by looking at women as an 'erotic object'. Therefore, the framing of the female vampire is problematic in films as the portrayal of the female vampire is captured by a camera often controlled by the male, reinforcing the male gaze. The angle and height of the camera affects the "perception of characters and plots in film narratives" (Sarria 2015:3). The female vampire is stereotyped as a result of the male gaze and by how the female vampire had been portrayed in early cinema.

#### 1.6.5. MONSTROUS FEMININE

*The Monstrous-Feminine* (1986) by Barbara Creed explores the female as monster in films and how commonly the victim is female, and the monster is male (Creed 1986:1). This psychoanalytic view explores how the female monster threatens the boundaries of male subjectivity and patriarchal thought. Creed explains that the woman-as-monster has not been explored enough in film (1986:1) and this proves true in this discussion of the female vampire. By understanding the monstrous-feminine, this paper will investigate how the portrayal of the vampire conforms to male-created stereotypes.

#### 1.7. METHODOLOGY

It will be argued that the female vampire is confined to stereotypes and lacks agency and character development in vampire films. This qualitative research paper will investigate the portrayal of the female vampire through observations made from the films *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and the *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012). By analysing and examining the female vampire in selected films can it be determined how the female vampire has been stereotyped, to what extent has patriarchal thinking confined the female vampire to such stereotypes and if the female vampire could

exist without being stereotyped. Through explorative research can it be determined how the portrayal of the female vampire conforms to male-created stereotypes.

## 1.8. PROPOSED ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL INTERPRETATION

This research will analyse the female vampire within vampire films such as *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012) with a mention of *Queen of the Damned* (2002), *Van Helsing* (2004), *Trick 'r Treat* (2011), *Vampire Academy* (2014), *Night Teeth* (2021) and *Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter* (2012). The majority of the female vampires in the films lack agency, lack nuance, and are characterised as being evil, sexual, powerful, and being an object of another character's desire. To determine how the portrayal of the vampire conforms to male-created stereotypes and still conforms to male-created stereotypes this paper will analyse and explore the female vampire in a period filmic setting and a modern filmic setting.

## 1.9. DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICAL WORK

To practically demonstrate the theory outlined in this research I will be adapting the vampire novel, *Dracul* (2018) by Dacre Stoker and J.D. Barker, set in the Victorian era, into a feature-length script (approximately 120 pages). The *Dracul* (2018) novel features the female vampire being pursued by the human children she raised and the self-assured male vampire that turned her. Drawing upon binary opposition, the strict adaptation will be through Bram Stoker's perspective, the male protagonist of the novel. The script will contrast the accompanying diary, a creative writing piece, through Ellen Crone's perspective, being the female vampire in the novel. This practical will showcase the male perspective alongside the female vampire perspective. The diary will serve as a personal literature piece that showcases the female vampire as a non-sexualized, non-objectified woman with her voice, and motivations that can be empathised with.

## 1.10. DELIMITATIONS

With the female vampire existing in films, TV series, games, books and other forms it is practical to focus on vampire films for this research. Most of the films mentioned in this research have been adapted from literature, however the portrayal of the female vampire is not consistent with her portrayal in the source material and often her character will be sexualised for the screen and the male audience. There will be little reference to the books belonging to the source material in this research.

## 1.11. CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One consists of an introduction to the study. Chapter Two consists of the theoretical framework consisting of feminist concepts, such as Phallogentrism, binary thinking, feminism, stereotypes and an overview of the female vampire. The purpose of these ideas and theories is to discuss concepts that will enable the analysis of the female vampire. Chapter Three consists of two case studies in which a traditional and modern female vampire will be analysed and discussed in order to establish how the female vampire is stereotyped. In chapter Four I will discuss the practical and how the theory relates to it, as well as exploring the female vampire in the accompanying practical. Chapter Five concludes the study and will present the findings of the previous chapters.

## CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the theoretical framework. It will be argued that the portrayal of the female vampire is phallogentric. Phallogentrism is the ideology that the phallus, the male sexual organ, is the centre of the social world. It consists of binary thinking, which means that women, such as the female vampire in films, will be portrayed in a stereotypical manner. The stereotypes relevant to the female vampire include, but are not limited to, virgin/whore and passive/active object. This section will argue that the activities of the female vampire in films creates the female vampire as the monstrous feminine. These theories and ideas will be applied to selected vampire films in order to establish how the portrayal of the vampire conforms to male-created stereotypes.

### 2.2. A BRIEF BACKGROUND ON THE FEMALE VAMPIRE AS SEXUAL OBJECT

Vampires in many modern films and newer literary pieces either conform to the quintessential vampire that had been established in older literature or reject that design deliberately (Riddle 2020:80) to create a different kind of vampire<sup>3</sup>. Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897) established the quintessential self-assured male vampire and the irrational female vampire. The female vampire was designed to be a sexually charged creature of darkness whereas the male vampire was designed to steal away unavailable women. The sexual desire of the female vampire has been a way of luring a victim into a trap (Vogel 2011:16). The literary female vampire was written to be a sexual threat to men, however, she would still be submissive to her male vampire sire. Her over-sexualised nature often leads to her death. From this depiction the stereotype has remained in various vampire films with the female vampire being possessed by a great sexuality after they are turned into a vampire. The female vampire, even in recent vampire films, are confined to this stereotype and lack agency and character development.

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<sup>3</sup> A type of vampire that does not share the same tropes as *Dracula* (1897) or *Carmilla* (1872).

## 2.3. DEATH-DEALING BINARY PERCEPTION

Cinema is regarded as patriarchal and serves the male narrative by featuring the self-assured male protagonist for the male audience (Mulvey 1975:810). Women were often sexualized in films, however, it is not as prevalent now. With this in mind, the human woman in films has been liberated from her sexualised stereotypes, but the female vampire has not. The female vampire has served and is continuing to serve the male fantasy. Discussing binary opposition will aid in this investigation and answer how the portrayal of the female vampire conforms to male-created stereotypes.

### 2.3.1. ACTIVE/PASSIVE

Female/male or feminine/masculine are binary oppositions (Moi 1997: 124) where the male is active, and the female is passive. The male is dominant and active, whereas the female is submissive and passive, which is a concept created by the patriarchy (Moi 1997:118) to remain dominant and retain control of women in society. The female vampire is villainised if she becomes active, and is idolised when she is passive. 'Feminine' and 'masculine' represent social constructs "imposed by cultural and social norms" (Moi 1997: 122) where the feminine is to be sweet, modest, subservient, and humble (Moi 1997: 123) and to be masculine is to be tough and dominant. The victimisation of women by men (Moi 1997: 119) is sanctioned in film, however the victimisation and violence towards female vampires in films is the norm.

A woman who is passive in her sexuality is an innocent victim and a woman who is active in her sexuality is a gory vampire (Vogel 2011:4). When the female vampire actively displays her sexuality, she is depicted as an outlaw of society (Demetrakopoulos 1977:107) resulting in the female vampire's death. Either a woman is passive, or she does not exist (Moi 1997:125). A woman "who refuses to conform can be labelled both unfeminine and unnatural" (Moi 1997: 123) and so the female vampire is monstrous, in this case by being both unfeminine and feminine. The female vampire endangers the boundaries of gender roles as the female vampire cannot be domesticated by men and only with the destruction of the female vampire is order restored (Vogel 2011:11). In films, if the female vampire is active



then she must be killed, but if she is passive she may survive. The female vampire begins to sound like the independent modern woman, however, the female vampire on screen is not treated as such; she is still confined to a sexualized and objectified character that lacks development.

### 2.3.2. STEREOTYPES

The character of the female vampire is predominantly flat, only consisting of one notable characteristic. A round character would have layers to their design, they would have their own desire, choices, fears and morals whereas a flat character would typically have a single characteristic that identifies them (Fishelov 1990:426). The female vampire in literature was designed flat and their successors that have been adapted for films are just as flat. The femme fatale is one of the dominant stereotypes of the female vampire.

#### 2.3.2.1. FEMME FATALE

The female vampire as the femme fatale operates according to binary thinking and is juxtaposed to the maiden (also known as the virgin). The femme fatale is a common archetype that features “the fatal woman or the fatal wife” (Smith 2015: 2). The femme fatale was created to be attractive, liberated from societal constraints and possesses sexual independence (Smith 2015: 21), however, these characteristics are not consistent in their representation. This archetype exists to liberate women from their domestic roles (Smith 2015: 2), however the archetype has introduced the problem of the over-sexualised and dangerous woman, playing as a male fantasy in films. The archetype is dramatized in the shift to horror films where the femme fatale is the monster, as ‘vamp’ (for vampire) is an alternative term for the femme fatale (Smith 2015: 7). The female vampire is meant to be free from societal constraints and independent in her sexuality, however she is stereotypically over-sexualised, and this potent sexuality is feared, resulting in her being killed. The female vampire lacking in freedom and sexual independence mirrors the continued fear towards gender equality and feminism (Smith 2015: 22). This fear of feminism has confined the female vampire to male-created stereotypes.

#### 2.3.2.2. VIRGIN/WHORE

The femme fatale is juxtaposed to the virginal, maiden figure (Smith 2015: 19). In traditional vampire narratives women are either virgins or whores, human or vampire, and after the human virgin is penetrated by fangs, they become whores (Smith 2020:5) and display “dangerous” sexuality (Smith 2020:4). The human woman (virgin) is virtuous and passive in her sexuality whereas the female vampire (whore) is the opposite, displaying their sexuality and expressing sexual desire in a way that threatens men (Smith 2020:4). Traditionally men would pursue the maiden, but would lust after the whore and when they could not possess the whore then they had to destroy her. Many female vampires in films have been slain for being dangerous and untameable.

The female vampire exists as the whore stereotype because it is the penetration of the male vampire’s fangs, mirroring a sexual encounter, that transitions the human virgin into the vampire whore. The male vampire and the female vampire both possess fangs that represent the phallus, however the male vampire possesses the phallus, but relies on his fangs to penetrate and “reproduce”. The male vampire does not require a phallus to “reproduce”, only his fangs, framing male vampires as castrati with sexual impotence (Worley 1989:25-27). The stereotypical erotic and sexually powerful male vampires are negatively feminine (Worley 1989:25 & 30). In the world of vampires, blood is an equivalent for semen, therefore the vampire's drawing of blood becomes the archetypal feminine act of motherhood, the reception of semen (Worley 1989:29). The female vampire is a giver and recipient of life, possesses the phallus and sexual independence, yet is described as a whore even when the male vampire behaves the same. The male vampire and female vampire are the same on paper but are forced into stereotypical gender roles with the male vampire as a self-assured and dominant character whereas the female vampire is submissive to her sire. The female vampire as a whore is a male-created stereotype.

#### 2.4. THE MALE GAZE

Laura Mulvey’s theory of the male gaze (1975:809) in cinema showcases how women are subjected to being sexualised and objectified in films. The female

vampire is subjected to the same treatment in films. The female vampire as a character exists as the male fantasy due to her stereotypical sexualised and objectified portrayal in film. The appearance of a woman on screen was limited to an “erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium” (Mulvey 1975:809). The visual presence of a woman “tends to work against the development of a story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation” (Mulvey 1975:809) and the presence of the female vampire serves the same purpose. The ‘male gaze’ is responsible for the female vampire being confined to male-created stereotypes.

The position of women as being a source of pleasure in the film starts from the male director to the male spectator. This pleasure of looking is scopophilia (Mulvey 1975:806) and men receive this type of cinematic pleasure by looking at women as an ‘erotic object’. The female vampire displays her sexuality and is sexually charged, making her a desired sexual object by the male audience (Mulvey 1975:809). Mulvey states that it is the male lead in a film that is active in the narrative, “the bearer of the look of the spectator” (Mulvey 1975:810). The male director and the male spectator impose their fantasies and obsessions on women (Mulvey 1975:804) and therefore the ‘male gaze’ is responsible for the continued plight of the female vampire as an ‘erotic object’. The notion of the male gaze fortifies the relegation of the female vampire into the role of the femme fatale or whore.

#### 2.4.1. THE CREATION OF THE GAZE: SHOTS, ANGLES AND POWER

The framing of the female vampire is problematic in the selected films as the portrayal of the female vampire is captured by a camera often controlled by men, reinforcing the male gaze. The angle and height of the camera affect the “perception of characters and plots in film narratives” (Sarria 2015:3). In films, the stature of a character relates to that of power as height translates into a physical advantage “low angles are described as empowering characters – physically, psychologically or socially – while high angles are thought as having the opposite effect” (Sarria 2015:8). The female framed in a low angle reinforced her submissive and passive nature whereas the male is framed in a high angle reinforcing his dominance and power in the narrative. The lack of a female director and camera operator results in

the objectified female vampire in films. The female vampire framed by the male operator for the male audience confines the female vampire to male-created stereotypes.

## 2.5. MONSTROUS FEMININE

Commonly the victim is female, and the monster is male (Creed 1986:1), however, the monstrous-feminine introduces the female as the monster. This psychoanalytic view explores how the female monster threatens the boundaries of male subjectivity. Creed explains that the woman-as-monster has not been explored enough in film (1986:1) and this proves true in this discussion of the female vampire. The audience will fear the female monster differently compared to the male monster as they represent alternative fears. The male monster is feared for the violence he exhibits towards women and the female monster is feared for representing the castrated other (Creed 1986:3). The female monster is created from the male perspective and has been neglected to be explored further from the female perspective (Smith 2020:9). The monstrous-feminine potentially can become transgressive and empowering (Smith 2020:10), however the female vampire as the monstrous-feminine has been confined to male-created stereotypes.

## 2.6. CONCLUSION

This section has discussed the femme fatale, virgin/whore and active/passive object stereotypes in relation to the female vampire and binary thinking. The 'male gaze' is responsible for the sexualisation of the female vampire in films and the lack of a female director and camera operator results in the objectified female vampire in films. The female vampire should exist outside the stereotypes and represent the liberated woman without the consequence of death and not be confined to a stereotypical sexualised and objectified character. The female vampire, even in recent vampire films, is confined to this stereotype and has little to no development from its predecessors. The monstrous-feminine potentially can become transgressive and empowering (Smith 2020:10), however, the female vampire as the monstrous-feminine has remained as a sexualised and objectified character. The concepts in this chapter will be applied to the case studies in chapter three where the

female vampire in selected films will be analysed and be compared to its male counterpart in order to answer how the female vampire has been confined to male-created stereotypes.

## CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF THE FEMALE VAMPIRE IN SELECTED FILMS

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

The theories and concepts explored in Chapter Two will be applied to the female vampires in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and to the protagonists within the *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012). *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) features the quintessential vampire type whereas *Twilight* (2008) features a more modern and domesticated (romanticised) vampire type (Riddle 2020:80). It will be argued that the portrayal of the female vampire is phallocentric. This chapter will apply binary thinking and stereotypes including the femme fatale/maiden, virgin/whore and active/passive object to the female vampires in the case studies. These theories and ideas will be applied to selected vampire films in order to prove that the female vampire is confined to male-created stereotypes.

### 3.2. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE FEMALE VAMPIRES IN *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* (1992) & *TWILIGHT SAGA* (2008-2012)

The female vampires in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) are designed to be sexually charged creatures of darkness, posing a threat to men, but obeying their sire. The female vampires in *Twilight* (2008) are divided into two categories, those that conform to the patriarchal design and those that do not. The vampires in both films rely on their sexual desirability in the way of luring a victim into a trap (Vogel 2011:16). By discussing the female vampires from these case studies further will reveal how the female vampire, even in recent vampire films, are confined to stereotypical portrayals, lacking agency and character development.

The vampire type in *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012) differs from the traditional vampire that is featured in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and has vampires that cannot die from sunlight, shape-shift, or sleep in coffins of dirt, and do not fear the cross. The vampire type in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) features the quintessential vampire (Riddle 2020:80), where they are weak in the sunlight, can shape-shift, require to sleep in coffins of dirt, fears the cross and where the vampire who sires another can control them. Within the *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012), the stereotypes and binary

oppositions within the Cullen family, the trio of vampires and the relationship between Edward and Bella will be explored. The Cullen family conforms to the patriarchal family design, with a father as the protector, a stay at home mother that can cook and the children. The Cullen family does not feed on humans whereas the trio of vampires are more traditional for existing outside the patriarchal design and feeding on humans. The female vampires in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) are designed to be sexually charged creatures of darkness, posing a threat to men, but obeying their sire. Within the *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012), the development of Bella's character and her relationship with Edward only progresses through Edward's bite. Bella's once shy and awkward self disappears when she becomes a vampire and a mother. This introduces stereotypes and binary opposition where, through Edward's bite, mimicking a sexual encounter, Bella changes from the virtuous virgin to the femme fatale vampire. The vampires in both films rely on their sexuality in the way of luring a victim into a trap (Vogel 2011:16). Discussing the female vampires from these case studies further will reveal how the female vampire, even in recent vampire films, is confined to male-created stereotypes.

### 3.3. BINARY THINKING AND STEREOTYPES: APPLIED TO THE FEMALE VAMPIRE

The stereotypical female vampire arose from the repeated sexualised and objectified portrayal in films. Female vampires such as Queen Akasha (*figure 1*) in *Queen of the Damned* (2003), Vadoma (*figure 2*) in *Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter* (2012), and the sister-wives (*figure 3*) in *Van Helsing* (2004) were sexualised, objectified, and killed.



**Figure 1:** 'Queen Akasha dancing before slaughtering everyone'. Screenshot from *Queen of the Damned* (2003)



**Figure 2:** 'Female vampire pinning down a male human'. Screenshot from *Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter* (2012)





**Figure 3:** 'The sister-wives seeking attention from Dracula'. Screenshot from *Van Helsing* (2004)

Their characters are flat (Fishelov 1990:426) compared to their male counterparts. A notable point on the stereotypical female vampire is a repeated use of the high angle shot looking down on the female vampire (and monster) affording a view of her breasts as she straddles and prepares to kill her prey. The three screenshots from *Vampire Academy* (2014) (*figure 4*), *Fright Night* (2011) (*figure 5*) and *Trick 'r Treat* (2007) (*figure 6*) mirror each other, the frame sexualises and objectifies her, and serves the male gaze.



**Figure 4:** 'Female vampire after killing a man'. Screenshot from *Vampire Academy* (2014)



**Figure 5:** 'Female vampire preparing to kill a man'. Screenshot from *Fright Night* (2011)



**Figure 6:** 'female monster preparing to kill a man'. Screenshot from *Trick 'r Treat* (2007)

The female vampire in these examples are confined to stereotypes such as the femme fatale, being the 'whore'. They are sexually active and a threat to men, being passive towards her male vampire sire, and all these characteristics is the result of the 'male gaze'. These repeated stereotypes and type of framing is problematic as it confines the female vampire to continue being sexualised, and objectified and be confined to male-created stereotypes.

### 3.3.1. ACTIVE/PASSIVE IN *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* (1992) & *TWILIGHT SAGA* (2008-2012)

The sister-wives, Lucy and Mina are submissive to Dracula, as he sired them. Once Lucy and Mina have been bitten by Dracula, they become "sick with sexuality", their behaviour is out of their control and the female vampires therefore behave according to what Dracula wants them to do. The sister-wives act as one unit, obey Dracula's wishes, and only request food from Dracula, mirroring the imagery of a master and his dogs (*figure 7*).



**Figure 7:** 'The sister wives receiving food from Dracula'. Screenshot from *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992)

Lucy and Mina, once bitten behave unlike themselves, sexual, dangerous, and wanting to bite the men around them. The female vampires in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) are not themselves and are submissive to their sire by nature. Woman are either passive or do not exist (Moi 1997:125), just as the female vampires are killed for being active.

Throughout the *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012) Bella relies on Edward, as a romantic partner and protector. Edward does everything for Bella, saves her life several times, protects her, and is very protective and possessive over her. In *Twilight* (2008), after Bella is rescued, again, by Edward, he claims that he is very protective of Bella and Bella doesn't acknowledge that his possessiveness can be a danger to her. Bella's agency starts and ends by placing herself in danger, knowing that Edward will protect and save her. In *New Moon* (2009), in Edward's absence, Bella tries to kill herself, in hopes that Edward will return to save her (*figure 8*).





**Figure 8:** 'Bella asking Laurent to kill her'. Screenshot from *New Moon* (2009)

Bella would rather die than live without Edward. Bella relies on Edward to protect her, however, it is only when he is threatened that Bella must act. In *Eclipse* (2010), when Edward is about to be killed by two other vampires, Bella cuts her arm to distract the two vampires long enough for Edward to kill them (*figure 9*).



**Figure 9:** 'Riley and Victoria reacting to Bella's blood'. Screenshot from *Eclipse* (2010)

Bella knowingly puts herself in danger so she can be saved by Edward. Bella is the passive maiden and is there only to be saved while Edward is actively saving her. Without Edward, Bella would kill herself and so without the active male, the passive female cannot exist (Moi 1997:125).

### 3.3.2.1. FEMME FATALE: APPLIED TO *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* (1992) & *TWILIGHT SAGA* (2008-2012)

The female vampires in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) exhibit the problematic version of the femme fatale that has been over-sexualised and overused. Lucy and the sister-wives of Dracula use their beauty and body to lure and subdue men, imposing a dangerous sexuality, as they rub Jonathan suggestively upon their first meeting (*figure 10*).



**Figure 10:** 'A sister-wife seducing Jonathan'. Screenshot from *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992)

After Mina and Lucy had been bitten by Dracula, they show the symptom of turning into vampires by displaying their sexuality and wanting the men around them to be close. The female vampire is meant to be the femme fatale, free from societal constraints and independent in her sexuality, however, Lucy and the sister-wives, as

fully vampire, have been stereotypically overs-exualised, and this potent sexuality is feared resulting in Lucy and the sister-wives' deaths. The femme fatale is the strong, powerful and dangerous woman (Smith 2015: 2), however, the archetype has introduced the problem of the repeated over-sexualised and dangerous woman, playing as a male fantasy in films.

Apart from *Breaking Dawn: part 2* (2012) throughout the *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012) Bella is confined to the maiden stereotype where she is weak, submissive and relies on Edward as a romantic partner and protector. She relies on Edward to the extent that when Edward leaves the town, in *New Moon* (2009), Bella becomes suicidal, believing Edward will save her if she puts herself in danger. In the film, Bella is about to jump off a cliff while a vision of Edward is there telling her not to jump (*figure 11*).



**Figure 11:** 'A sister-wife seducing Jonathan'. Screenshot from *New Moon* (2009)

In *Breaking Dawn: part 2* (2012), Bella as the female vampire is independent, strong and dangerous. Bella kills a mountain lion by herself, physically harms Jacob after finding out he imprinted in her daughter (*figure 12*) and casually challenges the other male vampires physically in the Cullen family.



**Figure 12:** 'Bella dragging Jacob out the house'. Screenshot from *Breaking Dawn: part 2* (2012)

Bella becomes the femme fatale when she becomes a female vampire. Bella as a human is the submissive maiden, but transitions into the femme fatale when she becomes the female vampire. Bella as both a human and a vampire is confined to stereotypes and lacks both agency and character development.

### 3.3.2.2. VIRGIN/WHORE: APPLIED TO *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* (1992) & *TWILIGHT* (2008)

The female vampire possesses fangs with the power to “reproduce” asexually (Worley 1989:25-27) which destroys the sexual difference between the male vampire and the female vampire. Once Dracula shares his blood with Lucy and Mina they become sick with ‘sexuality’ (Smith 2020:4-5), mirroring a sexual encounter. The sister-wives are the only type of a female vampire in the film that actively penetrate with their fangs as seen in their encounter with Jonathan. The human woman (virgin) is virtuous and passive in her sexuality whereas the female vampire (whore) is the opposite, displaying their sexuality and expressing sexual desire is a way that threatens men (Smith 2020:4). The notion of the female vampire as the whore is reinforced when Van Helsing identifies Lucy as a vampire and calls her “a whore of darkness” which juxtaposes the virgin good human woman (Smith 2015:19) in the



film (*figure 13*). The female and male vampire have no sexual difference, yet the female vampire is still in the position of victim in the film.



**Figure 13:** 'Lucy as a full vampire'. Screenshot from *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992)

The act of penetrating fangs in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) mirrors Edward injecting his venom into Bella and biting her (*figure 11*) in *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012) serving the stereotypical sexualisation of the vampire bite (Vogel 2011:16).



**Figure 14:** 'Edward injecting his venom into Bella's chest'. Screenshot from *Breaking Dawn: part 1* (2011)

In *Breaking Dawn: part 2* (2012), Bella is now a vampire, however her character changes, she is now confident, beautiful, stronger than Edward and independent (figure 12).



**Figure 15:** 'Bella admiring herself as a vampire'. Screenshot from *Breaking Dawn: part 2* (2012)

The female vampire is designed to be 'perfect' and in the film, Bella is forced to meet her father and is told to slouch, blink more, and shrug more to appear her human awkward self. Bella's transition from the maiden and the virgin into the femme fatale and the whore is the result of Edward's venom. Only through Edward's venom, mirroring semen, is Bella now a woman, independent, strong, and beautiful. Following stereotypes, Bella was the virgin, but became the female vampire, the whore, after her body received Edward's venom. Bella has been confined to stereotypes and lacks agency and individual character development.

### 3.4. THE MALE GAZE APPLIED TO *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* (1992) & *TWILIGHT SAGA* (2008-2012)

In *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), Dracula treats the women as his property and prize. The problematic view of masculinity in the film is how Dracula "demonstrate[s] possessive and animalistic behaviours over" (Riddle 2020:21) his sister-wives, Lucy, and Mina. Dracula in his beast-like form rapes Lucy on their first encounter and is conscious about her up and until her death. His interaction with Mina is more gentlemanly until they share blood and he, in his bat-like form, claims that "[Mina] is now [his] bride". The narrative pauses when the sister-wives force their sexuality upon Jonathan (*figure 16*) and this scene invokes scopophilia (Mulvey 1975:806) for the male spectator.

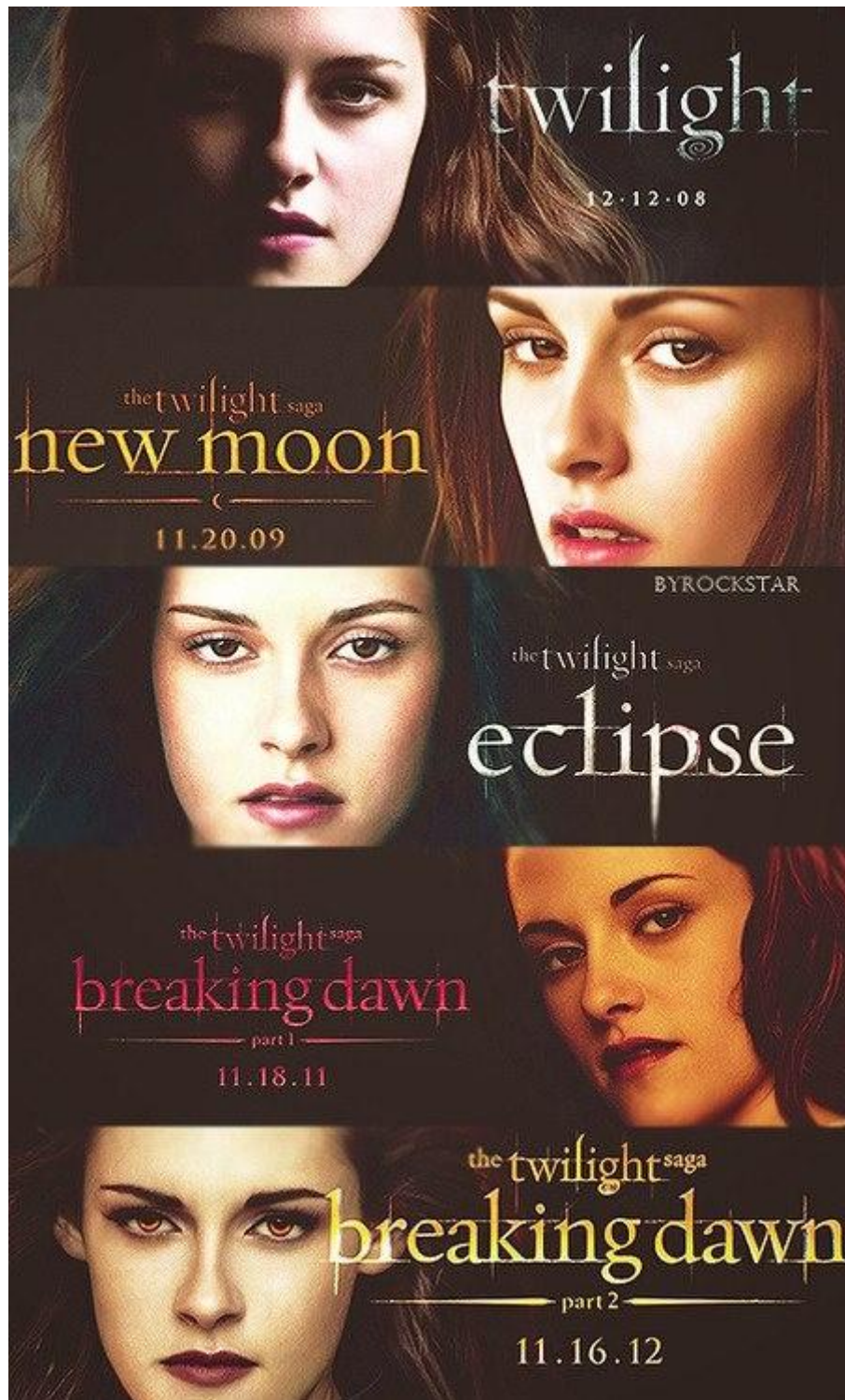


**Figure 16:** 'The sister-wives with Jonathan'. Screenshot from *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992)

The female vampire displays her sexuality and is sexually charged making her a desired sexual object by the male audience (Mulvey 1975:809). The female vampires behave as the male fantasy due to their sexualised and objectified portrayal in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992).

The female gaze functions as the opposite of the male gaze where the female subject is not sexualised, is active in the narrative and is independent. The *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012) exists as the failed female gaze, where Bella's character changes throughout the *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012) as seen in the poster (*figure 17*). Bella as a character is not consistent from her initial portrayal as an innocent virgin to the beautiful sexy female vampire. The poster slowly forces Bella to progressively become more feminine and beautiful. In the poster referencing *Twilight* (2008) Bella has her mouth closed with neutral colours reinforcing the maiden stereotype and in *New Moon* (2009) Bella has her mouth open with warm colours which makes her inviting to the viewer. Bella's features have been edited in *Breaking Dawn: part 2* (2012) compared to *Eclipse* (2012), to make her more appealing and beautiful, darker lips, heavy eye make-up and a symmetrical face.





**Figure 17:** 'Bella's character'. Screenshot from *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012)

Although Bella is not sexualised and objectified to the viewer it is how other characters in the films behave toward Bella. In *Twilight* (2008) directed by Catherine Hardwicke, Bella is meant to be the bearer of the female gaze, however, she is

harassed for being the new beauty in the town (*figure 18*) through her 'friends' from school clinging to her and being cornered by a group of men. Although the framing of Bella does not objectify her, the other characters in the film do, by kissing her without consent, Edward by stalking her, and a group of men by catcalling her and then later attempting to sexually assault her.



**Figure 18:** 'Bella being harassed by male classmates'. Screenshot from *Twilight* (2008)

In *New Moon* (2009) directed by Chris Weitz, Edward's absence introduces two problematic scenarios where Jacob is quick to attempt to replace Edward as her lover and Bella becomes suicidal. Bella actively searches for ways she can kill herself believing Edward will be there to save her. The film frames Bella as a suicidal desperate girl who will die without protection and being saved by Edward and Jacob. In *Eclipse* (2010) directed by David Slade, Bella's life depends on the Cullen family and the wolf pack to protect her from an army of newborn vampires (newly turned vampires). Bella and Edward genuinely love each other whereas Bella loves Jacob as a friend, but Jacob loves her as a romantic partner. The film romanticises Edward and Jacob fighting over Bella, framing Bella as the prize to win (*figure 19*).



**Figure 19:** 'Jacob and Edward fighting over Bella'. Screenshot from *Eclipse* (2009)

In *Breaking Dawn* part 1 and part 2 (2011-2012) directed by Bill Condon, Bella falls pregnant with a human-vampire hybrid baby that nearly kills her, resulting in Edward using his venom to turn Bella into a vampire. Bella's transition from frail pregnant woman to beautiful and strong female vampire through Edward's venom mirrors the transition from maiden to femme fatale and frames Bella as an imperfect character until she is a vampire. Bella as a human is the submissive and weak maiden and as a vampire she is strong and beautiful.

#### 3.4.1. THE CREATION OF THE GAZE: SHOTS, ANGLES AND POWER IN *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* (1992) & *TWILIGHT SAGA* (2008-2012)

In *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) Dracula is framed at a high angle giving him dominance and power compared to those framed below him as height translates into physical advantage (Sarria 2015:8) in film. When Dracula is confronted by Van Helsing's vampire hunting party he still has the power and the physical advantage by stature (*figure 20*).



**Figure 20:** 'Van Helsing's party confronting Dracula'. Screenshot from *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992)

Lucy, Mina and the sister-wives (*figure 13*) are framed below Dracula as the females are passive and submissive compared to the active and dominant male, Dracula. Other than the females it is the humans, the vampire's prey, that is framed below the vampire. When Lucy rises as a full vampire she attempts to seduce Arthur so as to feed on him, Lucy is framed in a high angle and places Arthur in a hypnotic, vulnerable state (*figure 21*). Although the vampire's prey is vulnerable to the vampire the female vampire is still submissive to the male vampire, Dracula.





**Figure 21:** 'Arthur (human) hypnotised by Lucy (vampire)'. Screenshot from *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992)

Bella in the *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012) is weak compared to her male counterparts as Bella is portrayed at a low angle looking up to Edward and Jacob as they tower over her (*figure 22*).



**Figure 22:** 'Jacob and Edward looking over Bella'. Screenshot from *Breaking Dawn: part 1* (2011)

The angle and height of the camera affects the “perception of characters and plots in film narratives” (Sarria 2015:3) and in *Breaking Dawn: part 1* (2011) Edward and Jacob hover over weak, frail and pregnant Bella. In *Breaking Dawn: part 2* (2012) Bella stands above Jacob threatening him, as Bella’s stature relates to that of power as height translates into a physical advantage (Sarria 2015:8). Compared to her human self, Bella as a vampire, is now strong and capable of protecting her daughter (figure 23).



**Figure 23:** ‘Bella looking over Edward and Renesmee’. Screenshot from *Breaking Dawn: part 2* (2012)

Bella as a human was physically weak and framed at a low angle compared to her male counterparts; it is only when she is a vampire that she is strong and can rival Edward and Jacob. Bella is confined to the stereotypes of being weak and submissive to Edward as a human, and is only strong and powerful as a mother vampire.

### 3.5. MONSTROUS FEMININE: APPLIES TO THE FEMALE VAMPIRE IN *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* (1992) & *TWILIGHT SAGA* (2008-2012)

Lucy became fully vampire and became the monstrous-feminine in one scene before she was slain. Mina expressed symptoms of becoming a vampire, however, she did not become the monstrous-feminine. Mina and Lucy are treated as victims of Dracula and the death of Lucy reinforces the common trope of the victim as female, and the monster as male (Creed 1986:1). The sister-wives are minor characters but express the monstrous-feminine through displaying their dangerous sexuality, killing horses, feeding off babies and representing the castrated other (Creed 1986:3) through the act of penetrating their prey with their fangs. The sister-wives were created from the male perspective and for the male perspective. The outcome of Mina, Lucy and the sister-wives would have differed if portrayed from the female perspective with the potential of the monstrous-feminine being transgressive and empowering (Smith 2020:10). Lucy and the sister-wives threaten the boundaries of male subjectivity and are killed for it and this limited their characters as being sexualised objects that serve the male gaze.

The monstrous-feminine in *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012) is absent due to Bella being a predominantly weak and passive character that is more of a danger to herself than anyone else. *Breaking Dawn: part 2* (2012) is the only film where Bella is a vampire and even then Bella is not monstrous and becomes domesticated (Riddle 2020:80). The domesticated female vampire is not scary or dangerous, but is lusted after and is passive. The monstrous-feminine potentially can become transgressive and empowering (Smith 2020:10), however the female vampire as the monstrous-feminine has not featured in the film and has been designed as a stereotypical character that lacks agency and character development. The woman-as-monster has not been explored enough in film (1986:1) and this proves true in this case study of the female vampire in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012).

### 3.6. CONCLUSION

This section has applied the femme fatale, virgin/whore and active/passive object stereotypes in relation to binary thinking and the traditional female vampires in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and the more modern female vampires in *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012). From the case studies it is clear that if the female vampires are not sexualised for the 'male gaze' then they are flat. The female vampire should exist outside the stereotypes and represent the liberated woman without the consequence of death and not be confined to the stereotypical sexualised and objectified character or a flat character. The monstrous-feminine potentially can become transgressive and empowering (Smith 2020:10), however the female vampire as the monstrous-feminine has either been sexualised or portrayed as a flat character. The female vampires, in the case studies, are confined to stereotypes and lack agency and character development.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION OF PRACTICAL WORK

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the practical component of this research. The practical component consists of a script and creative writing journal. This practical will aid in answering the question of how the female vampire is confined to male stereotypes. To practically demonstrate the theory outlined in this research I will be adapting the vampire novel, *Dracul* (2018) by Dacre Stoker and J.D. Barker, set in the Victorian era into a feature-length script (approximately 120 pages) and a journal (approximately between 50 to 100 pages). The script and the journal will contrast with each other as the script showcases the male point of view whereas the journal showcases the female point of view.

### 4.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim is for both pieces to contrast each other with the script showcasing Bram's point of view, as detailed in the novel, and the journal showcasing the female point of view. This script aims to explore the portrayal of the female vampire in the perspective of the Stoker siblings, Bram, Matilda and Thornley. The journal aims to provide the vampire Ellen with a voice. Key moments in the narrative have been rewritten from her perspective, in order to reveal her motivations, thoughts and emotions. Doing so will arguably recreate Ellen as a more rounded character, instead of a flat character. The objectives are a guide for the practical projects to follow.

These points will be explored:

- The point of view of the characters contrasting with each other.
- Differing accounts of events; points where an event is vague in the script, but is clarified in the journal from Ellen's perspective.

#### 4.3. THE SCRIPT

The script will include a logline and a synopsis that will summarise the narrative for the readers. In summary the narrative takes place when the Stoker siblings, Bram, Matilda, Thornley and their unlikely friend Vambery embark on a journey to find Ellen while being hunted themselves by Dracul, the antagonist. The script features the male perspective and how Bram views Ellen and her behaviour.

#### 4.4. THE JOURNAL

The journal's format is more lenient with a flow of someone writing in their personal journal. The journal entries will showcase moments from Ellen's human life, moments as a vengeful vampire, moments with Dracul and moments with the Stoker family. The journal starts two hundred years before Bram's birth but abruptly ends with Ellen's death. The journal is a piece that clarifies the female vampire's motivations, thoughts and feelings, and allows the reader to know the female vampire personally by reading her journal.

#### 4.5. APPLYING THE THEORY

In the case studies discussed in Chapter Three the female vampire is predominantly exploited for the male "[f]antasies and obsessions" (Mulvey 1975:804). The introduction of the sexually aggressive female vampire "freeze[s] the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation" (Mulvey 1975:809) in films. The woman functions on screen as "as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium" (Mulvey 1975:809). The female vampire is portrayed as the male fantasy being a product of sexual desire with the human moral woman being preyed upon by the male vampire and the female vampire sexually subduing their prey (Demetrakopoulos 1977:108). The theory of the 'male gaze' (Mulvey 1975:12) explains how the female vampire is turned into a sex object. The female vampire as sex object becomes a femme fatale in films.

The female vampires in *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012) and *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) are relatively flat. A flat character is a character only depicted through one

perspective and attention is drawn from one of their traits (Fishelov 1990:426). Ellen Crone has layers of her character, her as a mother and protector, her as a monster in memory, her as a victim of her vampiric condition and of Dracul and her as an individual. Compared to the restraints in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012) the vampires adapted from the *Dracul* (2018) novel share a combination of the two. The vampires sleep in dirt filled coffins, sunlight only weakens them and to kill a vampire they must have a stake through their heart, be beheaded and finally burned. The vampires can choose the state of their victims once they bite, either to turn them into vampires, keep them human or cause a sickness that robs victims of their free will.

Ellen Crone as a character in the script is not the “archetypal vampire” (Riddle 2020:24) as both a gory vampire and an innocent victim (Vogel 2011:4). The different characters in the novel and the script perceive Ellen in varying ways. Ellen as a gory vampire exists only in Bram's childhood memory, but she is also a victim of a tragic life, both as a human and as a female vampire. In the journal, Ellen is neither confined to the stereotypical sexually aggressive femme fatale nor or a tragic victim (Kristeva 1981:34). Unlike her predecessors being framed in a way that sexualises and objectifies the female vampire (Mulvey 1975:803). Ellen Crone as a female vampire has control over her appetite, she turns Patrick and Maggie into vampires, at their request, to save them from death as they are her beloved, Deaglan's, descendants. She breaks away from the stereotypical female vampire that do “suck the blood of helpless, often willing, victims and transforms them into her own kind” (Creed 1986:2). Ellen does not prey on humans and feeds off the blood of animals. Ellen never uses her vampiric power to lure or seduce her human prey.

The nature of the male vampire and the female vampire is expanded upon in the script and in the journal. The depiction of the male vampire and the female vampire need to contrast each other, as protagonist and antagonist, while still rejecting stereotypes. Dracul's decisions in the three narratives are based on possessing Ellen as a mate. Ellen is selfless, in both narratives, and chooses to exchange her life for those she cares about. Her supposed death is tragic and does not re-enforce “patriarchal values on a sexually transgressing woman” (Killeen 2014:91) compared to the female vampires in the case study. Her death is an act of motherly

self-sacrifice, not traditionally being the result of men unable to confine her into the “boundaries of gender roles in nineteenth-century society” (Vogel 2011:11). Ellen’s character can be explored further in the journal.

The monstrous-feminine is active in the accompanying practicals, the journal and the script. The vampire and their “monstrosity [have] been normalised and appropriated by mainstream culture” (de Bruin-Molé 2017:54), however, the female vampire’s potential, as the monstrous-feminine, has “been brutally ignored” in vampire films forcing her in a position of being a stereotypical creature of evil and aggressive sexuality (Kristeva 1981:28). There has always been a connection between sexuality and vampirism (Vogel 2011:22) as the sexual desire directed towards the vampire has been a way of luring a victim into a trap (Vogel 2011:16), but this is not the case for this practical. The female vampire represents sexual equality, free from societal pressures, expectations of motherhood and being a good wife and or partner. Rather than being depicted as an outlaw of society (Demetrakopoulos 1977:107) in films the female vampire should represent the free woman, free to express herself in any shape or form.

The absence of the monstrous-feminine forces the female vampire to conform to stereotypes and use her fangs in a way that mirrors a sexual encounter. The presence of fangs is intimate and loving in the narratives. Ellen bites Bram on the wrist, when he is both a boy and a man. By biting him on the wrist, her fangs are removed from being associated with a sexual encounter (Smith 2020:4). Ellen is the only adult female vampire in the narrative, she becomes a vampire by renouncing God and committing suicide much like how Dracula had done in *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* (1992). Maggie and Patrick choose to become a vampire and remain themselves and do not behave according to stereotypes. Emily however was forced to become half vampire by Dracul, and Emily, because of this, becomes unlike herself and obeys Dracul. Dracul is the only vampire that bites a victim by the neck. He bites Emily’s neck, not to possess her in any way but to steal her will and use her as leverage to over Ellen. Fangs in both the script and the journal do not represent phallic objects (Worley 1989:25), for the vampire to break away from their stereotypical sexual nature is to strip away the sexual nature of the vampire fangs.



Dracula is not dominant because of his fangs or because he is male. Rather, his dominance is ascribed to the fact that he is several centuries old and is therefore also very knowledgeable. Dracula has been a vampire for centuries, Ellen approximately two-hundred, Maggie and Patrick just over a decade and Deaglan has lived approximately one-hundred years as a vampire. Unlike the possessive and animalistic behaviour (Riddle 2020:21) Dracula and Edward express over the women in their lives, Dracula desires to possess Ellen Crone in all the narratives and genuinely attempts to gain her affection through gifts. However, it is only when Ellen sternly rejected him, that Dracula became desperate and impatient, resorting to violence in an attempt to use fear to keep Ellen close to him. Dracula's desperation to possess Ellen makes him dangerous (Halberstam 129), however, Ellen, Maggie, Patrick, and Deaglan are dangerous for simply being vampires, according to Vambery. Ellen expresses her sexuality as a form of love and intimacy and does not display her sexuality to be dangerous (Vogel 2011:3). Dracula as a male and the antagonist of the journal is more rounded than the stereotypical villainous male vampire in vampire films.

Ellen, in the journal, is a more autonomous character compared to in the script and the novel, not constrained to the stereotypical female vampire role and not a flat character by design. Ellen as a female vampire rejects the stereotypical female vampire depicted in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and rejects the flat character design of the female vampires within *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012). Ellen exists outside the "conventional feminine role" (Demetrakopoulos 1977:107), however not in a way that the female vampire had done prior to this through being sexually aggressive. If distortion and devaluation of feminine characteristics can be corrected by "a more accurate feminist description and appraisal" (Alcoff 1988:406) then there is a way to reimagine the female vampire in a way that she is not stereotypical, has agency and shows character development.

#### 4.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the two-part practical and how the female vampire does not conform to male-created stereotypes. Using the theory outlined in Chapter Two and the detailed case studies in Chapter Three the female vampire has been

explored practically in the form of a script and a journal, in a way that does not sexualise and/or objectify her. The female vampire should represent the free woman, the freedom to express her sexuality and her desires. The two-part practical contrast each other in terms of the perception of the female vampire.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

### 5.1. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The female vampire, even in recent vampire films, is confined to this stereotype and had little to no development in films. This paper has investigated how the portrayal of the vampire conforms to mal-createde stereotypes. The female vampires in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) and the *Twilight saga* (2008-2012) are analysed according to the male-created stereotypes of the femme fatale and the maiden. The female vampire is confined to the femme fatale stereotype which operates according to binary thinking and is juxtaposed to the maiden also known as the virgin (Smith 2015: 19). The female vampire is villainised if she becomes active, and is idolised when she is passive.

Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze (1975:809) in cinema showcases how women are subjected to being sexualised and objectified in films by the male camera operator for the male audience; this is also true for the female vampire. The female vampires in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) feature the 'male gaze' whereas the *Twilight saga* (2008-2012) features the failed female gaze. The monstrous-feminine potentially can become transgressive and empowering (Smith 2020:10), however the female vampire as the monstrous-feminine has either been sexualised or portrayed as a flat character. The female vampire has served and is continuing to serve the male fantasy.

### 5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research is needed to fully investigate how the portrayal of the vampire conforms to male-created stereotypes and how the female vampire might exist without being stereotyped in films. Perhaps this can be taken further into binary perception whereby the male vampire will be explored according to the theory. There is an opportunity to explore the female vampire in literature, series and games to fully understand the extent of this continuing prejudiced attitude towards the female vampire in films.

This paper answers how the portrayal of the female vampire conforms to male-created stereotypes of the femme fatale and the maiden. The female vampire is confined to such stereotypes and had little to no development in films. To fully understand the extent of this continuing prejudiced attitude towards the female vampire in films there needs to be a further investigation to answer how the female vampire might exist without being stereotyped in films.

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