

Conclusion

5.1. Overview

With the re-assertion of heteronormativity in the thematic representation of the American vampire narratives in the late twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries, the legend of the vampire has entered a new zone of popular culture. The critical survey of the vampire narratives in Britain in the eighteenth century and in the United States of America in the late twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries has rendered a paradigm shift in the literary tradition of the narratives from the domain of dissidence, non-conformity, interrogation and subversion to the realm of conformity, validation and re-assertion of heteronormativity.

The new age vampires have come out in broad daylight on the populated streets of a modern city in the United States of America after centuries of refuge in cold coffins preserved in dungeons, secret chambers of the medieval castles in Europe. In spite of their nocturnal adventures and thirst for human blood, they are seen to have learnt ways to survive on animal blood and to coexist with humans as friends, lovers, and acquaintances.

The lone predator, who preferred to reside in segregation from human society in unidentifiable locations, loved to feed indiscriminately on humans, repulsed at the suggestion of normative relationships and dwells on incest, polygamy, homosexuality and sadomasochistic necrophilia in the nineteenth century, begins to crave for and participate in the heteronormative institution of family. The family is based on the foundation of the principle of heterosexual monogamy in the twenty-first century. The humans are no longer mere food to them, but legitimate partners in their ventures in the realm of marriage, procreation, parenthood and fidelity.

The journey of the vampires from Bram Stoker's *Count Dracula* to Stephenie Meyer's *Edward Cullen* is a journey from non-conformity to conformity. However, their mutation into creatures immune to the sun, ironically renders metaphoric imprisonment in the house of norms; the apparent emancipation implies categorical enslavement of the once archetypal overreacher. In short, the rebel vampires, who once aspired to appropriate heteronormativity by subverting it, end up being appropriated by heteronormativity itself.

My dissertation has endeavoured to trace the journey of the legend of vampires through centuries. A critical survey of the Asian, especially Indian myths akin to monstrosity such as the *Pishacha* and the *Vetala* renders the curious case of their affinity with the traits

characteristically constructed vampirism such as their desire to transcend temporal and spatial restrictions by virtue of their possession of the corpse, making them un-dead endowed with an insatiable thirst for the human blood. Moreover, the dangerous un-dead predators of the India have been shown to dwell on subversive sexuality such as polygamy, necrophilia and predominantly reversal of the sexual roles stipulated by heteronormativity by valorizing active females and passive males in sexual intercourse.

My dissertation draws references from the sacred texts of the *Vajrayana Tantra* to show the intertextual relationship between the European vampires and the Indian un-dead. The intertextual study of the Indian un-dead and the British vampire narratives complemented with the study of the cultural negotiation of India and Europe between the 10th and the 14th centuries, mediated by the inter-continental trade via the historical Silk Routes helped me to locate the viable possibility of the transportation of the Indian myths to Europe and their formative influence on the European vampires.

Following the critical overview of the origin of the vampire myth in Europe, my dissertation examines the socio-economic context and the cultural milieu behind the resurgence of the vampire myth in British literature and art in the nineteenth century. My dissertation primarily looks at the interrelation of the system of production in the capitalist economy and family, procreation and the easy availability and supply of labourers, not only in capitalism but also in political and sexual economy.

My dissertation critically evaluates the process of the construction of heteronormativity and builds upon the assumptions of the premises of arguments that Michel Foucault, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler and R. W. Connell posit. My study describes a shift in authority of the formulation and the stipulation of the normative codes of sexuality from the ecclesiastical to the bureaucratic order.

Following Foucault, my dissertation explores the formation of sexual codes in different social institutions such as schools, training institutes, medical institutes and family. My study describes the formation of heteronormativity on the basis of restrictions, prohibition and inhibition to set heterosexual monogamy followed by married couples as the norm. Such construction of heteronormativity, as my dissertation shows, is based on the exclusion of all forms of non-normative sexuality as aberrant. The strategy of heteronormativity is viewed as twofold: first, uninterrupted surveillance on children's sexuality and their training to adapt with the traits of masculinity. Secondly, regulation of the sexual behaviour of the married couple to

conceive sexuality primarily as a mode of procreation. My study of the British Laws concerning sexuality and the medical discourse related to conjugal relationship and marital sex shows how the principles of heteronormativity had been incorporated in the socio-cultural framework of Britain in the nineteenth century. Moreover, homosocial bonding between men had been formed in order to build up an institution to construct a form of masculinity coded by heteronormativity to sustain the dominance of patriarchy. In short, the scene of heteronormativity constructed and proliferated in Britain in the nineteenth century is manifested in this study of mine.

My study of heteronormativity in the academic, the cultural, and the medical discourses in Britain in the nineteenth century is followed by the resurgence of the Gothic and vampire narratives as prominent literary forms and the culmination of the tradition in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, published in 1897. My dissertation makes a critical survey of the Gothic novels such as *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) by Horace Walpole, *Vathek: An Arabian Tale* (1786) by William Beckford, *The Monk: A Romance* (1796) by Matthew Lewis to show the sexual anxieties in nineteenth century England and the resultant subversion of the non-normative forms of sexuality in the milieu of repression and censorship.

The theoretical assumptions of Sigmund Freud and David Punter concerning the manifestation of repressed forms of sexuality in the form of monstrosity have revealed the socio-cultural context behind the resurgence and the growing popularity of Gothic and the vampire narratives in nineteenth century. Such a critical survey elucidates the context of the emergence of Count Dracula in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and his evolution to cult status.

The dissertation examines Dracula from the perspectives of the anxieties evident in the British empire concerning the threat of the import of non-normative sexual practices from the colonies in Asia for the vulnerability of the colonial bureaucrats, administrators and the military officials to the non-normative forms of sexuality by virtue of their exposure to the cultural practices in the colonies.

The evaluation of the condition of contemporary sex-workers in Britain and in India, the contemporary colonial laws formulated to regulate their behaviour in public spaces display the politics of repression of and the consistent state surveillance on the non-normative sexual practices. Moreover, the threat of sexually transmitted diseases through sexual contact and contamination of blood finds manifestation in the fear generated in the protagonists of *Dracula*

(1897). The violent methods to neutralize the threats assumed to have generated from non-normative sexuality promoted by the vampire narratives, especially of Count Dracula.

My study of the spatiality of the vampire narrative following the Foucaultian notion of heterotopia evidences the existence of region of the vampire at a liminal space between the inhibited and the uninhibited sexuality and any attempt to blur the distinction between them by overreaching the boundary. This practice would bring a serious imbalance in the structure of heteronormativity constructed and held by Victorian England. My dissertation demonstrates how the elements of non-normative sexuality, which interrogate and subvert the codes of heteronormativity are manifested in the character and actions of Count Dracula, who has emerged as a symbol of sexual dissidence in Victorian England and after.

The final part of my dissertation records the metamorphosis of the bizarre, monstrous, and subversive vampire into the conformist, handsome, familiar, and suave vampire in the late twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries in parallel with the transformation of masculinity in the late twentieth century.

My dissertation has primarily followed the theoretical assumptions of Michel Foucault and R. W. Connell concerning the shifting paradigm of the theoretical construction of the male body in order to discuss the socio-economic context behind the transformation of masculinity in consonance with the growing automation, expansion of the liberal economy, emergence of information technology and multinational corporate organizations in The United States of America in the post-globalization period. My dissertation has attempted to study the transformation of cultural construction that the male body in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries as a trope to impart the ideology of heteronormativity permeated through the conception of masculinity.

My study reveals the emergence of hegemonic masculinity in the post-globalization period that the United States of America possesses. It also analyses the appropriation of a part of the traits of non-normative sexuality under the compulsion that the growing challenges posed by the Feminism and the Queer Movements have on it. Such concession and appropriation of non-normative sexuality generate metrosexuality, a hybrid form of masculinity, which, despite its apparent affinity with the non-masculine characteristics to some extent, ironically strengthens and promotes the principles of hegemonic masculinity.

My dissertation has made a critical survey of vampire narratives in print and on screen, such as *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) by Anne Rice and made into a film (1994) by Neil Jordan,

Buffy, the Vampire Slayer (1992) directed by Fran Rubel Kuzui, *The Vampire Diaries* (1991-2011) written by L. J. Smith. This was translated into a television series (2009-17) by Kevin Williamson and Julie Plec; and the novels collectively known as *The Twilight Saga* (2005-09) written by Stephenie Meyer and the film versions (2008-12) directed by Catherine Hardwicke, Chris Weitz, David Slade, and Bill Condon.

My evaluation is based on the aforementioned novels, movies and the television series from the theoretical perspectives of hegemonic masculinity and metrosexuality are constructed by R. W. Connell, David Coad, Matthew Hall, Michael Flocker etc. They assert the appropriation of the traits of the same, by the vampire protagonists. Such an appropriation of heteronormativity in the form of hegemonic masculinity and metrosexuality by the vampire heroes affirms a re-assertion of heteronormativity by one of its most challenging antagonists signals a return of the once rebel into the mainstream. However, my dissertation has shown that the codes of heteronormativity, interrogated and subverted by the vampires in the nineteenth century have also evolved to suit the shifting paradigm of gender in the twenty-first century. This dissertation records a transformation, as well as an evolution of heteronormativity and at the same time, the metamorphosis of the vampire narratives through centuries to retain its popularity in conformity with the changing tastes and orientation of its readers and viewers.

5.2. Summary of My Research Findings

My study of the interrogation, subversion and re-assertion of the heteronormative codes of sexuality in Anglo-American vampire narratives began with the following research questions:

- (a) Did the vampire myth originate in India and travel to Slavic regions?
- (b) How did the Victorian strategy of repression of desire and construction of discourse concerning sexuality contribute to the resurgence of the vampire myth?
- (c) How did Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) interrogate and subvert the codes of heteronormativity prevalent in nineteenth century Britain?
- (d) How did the bizarre, monstrous, sexually subversive vampires of Victorian England metamorphose into the suave, handsome, sexually conformist vampires in the United States of America?

The first chapter of the dissertation has attempted an intertextual study of the Indian narratives such as *Vetala Pancavimsati* (c. 11th century AD), the tales from *The Jataka* (c. 3rd century BC) and the texts from the *Vajrayana Tantra* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and I think that it found various motifs such as the possession of the corpse and its insatiable thirst for blood as the elixir of eternal life, the animated corpse as predator of human beings, the monster with power to control Nature and the predatory nature of animals, the desire to attain immortality, the damnation of the creatures to the hell, their punishments with stakes etc. Moreover, the transportation of the tales from India to Europe via Central Asia has also been found by virtue of the altered versions of these tales from India in countries like Turkey. On the basis of the study, the dissertation addresses the question of the supposed origin of the vampire and located India as one of the potential sources. The chapter follows the intertextual as well as historical evidences and at the same time, has taken the Jungian hypothesis of the 'Collective Unconscious'¹⁰¹ behind the origin of myths in consideration.

The second chapter of my dissertation concentrates on the study of the Victorian socio-cultural context in order to trace the answer to the question of the role of the Victorian sexual politics behind the resurgence of the vampire myth in nineteenth century Britain. This chapter has attempted to study the medical discourse concerning conjugal relationship of the heterosexual married couple, the sexual acts and behaviour stipulated and prescribed as ideal and mandatory for the married couple. It also tries to make a statement on procreation and motherhood as the final destination of the married couple and women respectively. The necessity of following the principles of fidelity and obedience to the husband by the wife.

It also delved into the study of the British laws about homosexuality and the forcible de-recognition of the act as perversion and criminal offence, often subjected to severe punishments. The careful consideration of the manuals to be followed in preparatory schools for the adolescent boys aggravates the consistent surveillance on the sexuality of adolescent boys in order to prevent them in any form of engagement in non-normative sexual acts such as homosexuality, masturbation, premarital sex etc. By studying the documents from the theoretical perspectives of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and R. W. Connell my chapter finds the politics of repression, censorship, surveillance and normative codification of in Victorian England, that paved the way to the production of monstrosity and horror in Gothic narratives and the resurgence of the vampire myth culminated in the figure of

¹⁰¹ For a detailed discussion on Jungian assumptions on the *Unconscious*, see Chapter I of the present dissertation.

Count Dracula in order to manifest the desire and fascination for non-normative sexuality comprising homosexuality, lesbianism, necrophilia, incest, pedophilia and the like.

The third chapter deals with the question of the secret behind the immense popularity of Gothic and vampire narratives, especially the character of Count Dracula among the Victorian readers as well as among the following generations. My chapter endeavours to study Stoker's text from the perspective of Michel Foucault and traced the elements of subversive sexuality latent in Gothic and vampire narratives written in Britain in the nineteenth century along with their culmination in the narrative of *Dracula* (1897).

My chapter finds Count Dracula as one of the most prominent dissident icons to hold non-normative sexual desires and aspirations of a large population of readership in Victorian Britain and it contributed to the immense popularity of the text among the Victorian middle class readers. Count Dracula has been projected in this chapter as an alternative institution posing considerable challenge to the institution of heteronormativity by his uninhibited exercise of the sexual acts, prohibited by the state and thereby emerges as an archetypal rebel in disguise even not only to a huge section of Victorian readers, but also to several generations that follow.

My fourth chapter navigates through the vampire narratives of the United States of America in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, to address the final question related to the transformation of the vampires from monstrous, non-conformist predators into handsome, conformist, protective heroes in the vampire narratives of the United States of America.

My research tried to focus on the paradigm shift in the system of production with the advent of globalization in the unipolar world. The inception of information technology, corporate culture and work-ethics, the incessant growth of consumerism, the proliferation of the fashion industry and the shifting terrains of masculinity, as my research has shown, propelled the shift in the construction of masculinity itself. The emergence of metrosexuality, as the new form of masculinity to assert hegemonic masculinity under the growing pressure from the Feminist camp and the LGBT peer groups has been found as a new strategy applied by heteronormativity to sustain its domination and control over sexuality in the United States of America. The fashion industry, as my research finds, found the figure of the vampire as a potent medium to impart its agenda of expansion. Heteronormativity finds it effective to exploit its popularity in order to assert hegemonic masculinity mediated by metrosexuality. It sums up the process of the transformation, which my dissertation aims to show.

5.3. Direction of Further Research

In the present dissertation I have endeavoured to show one of the many aspects of the vampire myth as manifested in the narratives of Britain in the nineteenth century and The United States of America in the late twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries. However, the vampire myth appears to be a multi-dimensional area to offer inexhaustible scope for further probing. The studies conducted prior to my research tried to address different issues in their research.

While tracing the origin of the vampire myth, my research has only got the chance to focus on the Indian predecessors of the British vampires since the primary focus of my research is on the interrogation, subversion and re-assertion of the heteronormative codes of sexuality in Anglo-American vampire narratives. However, I feel what I have done here can include different accounts of vampires as they are narrated in vampire myths of different regions of the world such as the vampires in Africa, Latin America, and the Scandinavian and the Slavic region. I would have liked to go into the cults of *Vajrayana Tantra* practiced in Tibet and prevalent in medieval Bengal in India and the matrix of gender politics inherent in them in a more detailed manner, but could not do so with the limitations of a Ph.D. dissertation. My present study aspires to pursue further research in the domain of *Vajrayana Tantra* to reveal the gender politics permeated through the doctrine.

Further, the study of the metamorphosis of the vampire has opened up endless possibilities of representation and new vistas of probing. The vampire narratives, predominantly appearing on screen as films and web series and often in games and cartoons in the years after the publication of *Twilight Saga* (2005-09), demonstrate two primary trends: re-presentation of conventional nineteenth century British vampire narratives and new construction of the vampire narratives to suit the taste and temperament of the cyber age¹⁰². Moreover, the emergence of the suave, sophisticated and familiar vampire valorizing hegemonic masculinity leads to the export of American traits of masculinity as discussed in the previous chapter, to the former colonies and the third world countries. Such vampires featuring in television series and films in countries like Japan, Korea, India often imbibe and appropriate the traits of the local versions of masculinity with the agenda of promoting and endorsing American hegemonic masculinity prevalent in contemporary culture.

¹⁰² The Twenty-first century, predominantly driven and directed by information technology, audio-visual social media and digitization.

5.4. Vampire in Film and Popular Culture

In the introduction entitled 'Dracula: Undead and Unseen,' to the section 'Dracula in Film, Television, Documentary and Animation' in *Dracula and Visual Media: Film, Television, Comic Book and Electronic Game Appearances, 1921-2010*, edited by John Edgar Browning and Caroline Joan (Kay) Picart, David J. Skal has shown how Dracula has enlivened the imagination of the filmmakers and programmer of the games to produce different versions of Stoker's novel (Browning and Picart 11-17). I have here tried to show that these versions have elements of the Feminist, Queer, Postcolonial subtexts in order to produce new interpretations of the classic. Such interpretations involve critical introspection of the textual framework and contextualizing the myth in the socio-historical background in which the myth had been evolved. In the film *Dracula Untold* released in 2014 and directed by Gary Shore, the legendary tale of Vlad the Impaler, the medieval knight who is assumed to be the character upon whom the character of Count Dracula is based, the role of the legendary hero of the Crusades and his association with Turks have been re-presented in the form of Gothic fantasy.

Such a representation is perhaps an endeavour to redeem the monstrosity of Count Dracula in order to elevate him to the planes of a national hero, a patriotic warrior, who did not hesitate to embrace damnation in order to save his country from foreign invaders. My new interpretation opens up new prospects of delving into the vampire myth and reading it from different angles. The 2022 film *Morbius* written by Matt Sazama and Burk Sharpless and directed by Daniel Espinosa explores the theme of clinical vampirism and interprets the myth as a wondrous outcome of scientific research in the field of biochemistry. Thus, the vampire narratives have various projections and are used for advancing different fields.

Based on *Marvel Comics* (1971) the plot of *Morbius* (2022) describes the crisis faced by the scientist Michael Morbius following his invention of a serum from the vampire bat to cure some incurable diseases. The film has endowed the vampire myth a new dimension by projecting it as a scientific phenomenon, more common in the science fictions than in the supernatural Gothic tales. The name *Morbius* (means living vampire) gives an impression of continuity of the vampire myth. Such new constructions of the vampire myth require further study which the present research could not endorse for the limited scope of its stipulated area.

The research on the vampire myth appears to be a great intellectual experience as it compels the researcher to enter into the untreated alleys of history and myth, which have hardly been

treaded before. Any research on the vampire myth, therefore, appears to be a journey to be continued forever.

5.5. Conclusion

My research has shown me the path of research into a taken for granted tale of the myth of the vampire and made me think of the various sources, cultural implications on representation and practice from its inception to the continuing present in modes of the movies, video games, science fiction etc.