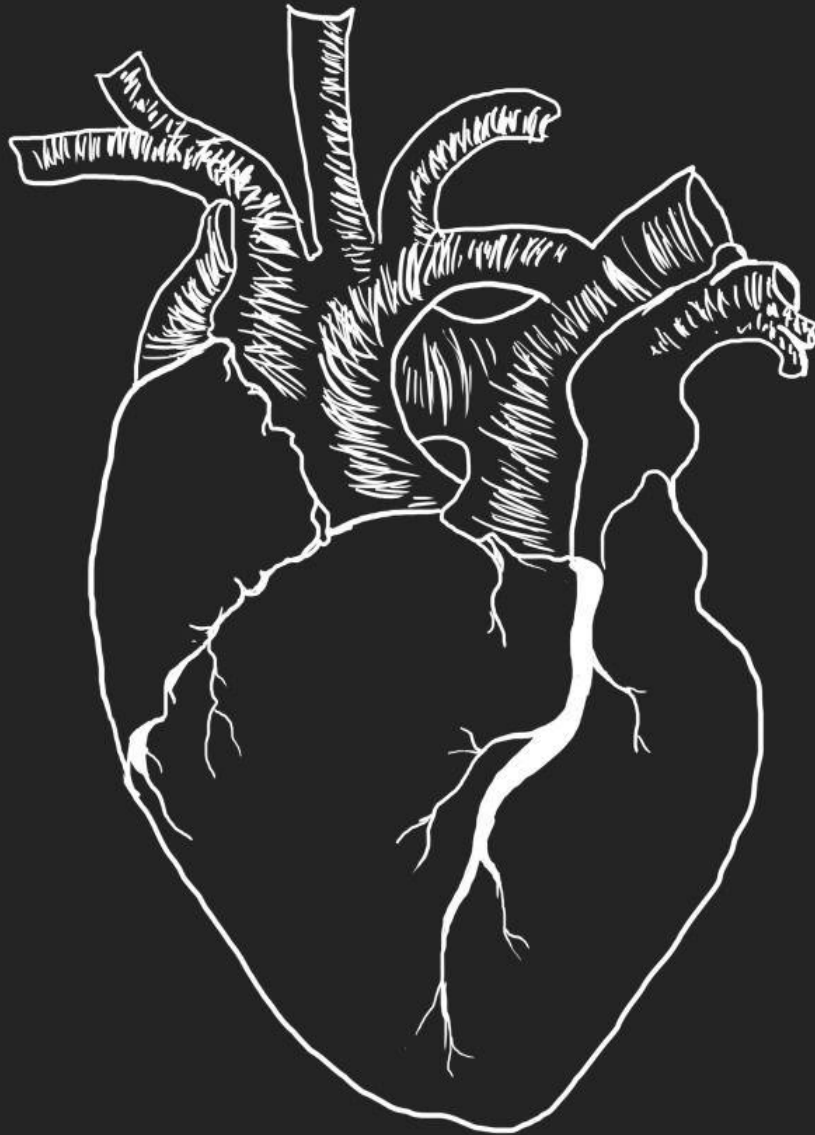


Dreadful Demons



Fearing the Nineteenth-Century Monster
in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Bram
Stoker's *Dracula*

Lotus van Overveldt

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FRANKENSTEIN AND BRAM STOKER'S *DRACULA*

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the fears expressed in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), and compares them to reviews from contemporaries of the authors. Prior research conducted on these two novels mainly discussed one or two fears epitomised by the characters and events in the novels. By providing an extensive chapter on fears in the nineteenth century, this thesis provides relevant background information in order to be able to understand the fears of abnormality, (female) sexuality, science, degeneration, fate, and the Other that are conveyed in *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. The secondary sources used in the writing of this thesis provide a balanced argument for the questions asked in this thesis.

Keywords: *Dracula*; *Frankenstein*; fear; the Gothic; the Other; (female) sexuality; degeneration; abnormality

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Introduction

For centuries, the monster has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for literature that makes people's hair stand on end. Cyclopes, dragons, and yetis have played their villainous parts in countless stories over the years. Evil faeries stole babies out of their beds, and horrifying tales of werewolves and witches kept children up at night. While the popularity of monster stories fluctuated, it reached its peak in the nineteenth century. In this era, two of the now most beloved monster stories were created in two Gothic novels: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). While written several decades apart, they are immensely popular even in the twenty-first century: one only needs to look at the numerous film and television adaptations (as well as (un)official sequels) that have been made of both novels.

Due to the fact that these novels were written 150-200 years ago, and of course due to their immense popularity even today, a substantial amount of research has been conducted. Fred Botting has shed light on the issues with science and responsibility in *Frankenstein*,¹ and has called the Monster “[the] villain, who is also the hero and victim.”² Maggie Kilgour compares Victor Frankenstein's unconventional methods to those of Sir Francis Bacon.³ William Hughes questions the ethics of the titular character's experiments.⁴ Jerrold E. Hogle discussed sexual and anti-feminist themes in *Dracula*.⁵ Carol Margaret Davison reads an “intense homosexual panic” into Stoker's novel.⁶ Maggie Kilgour argues that *Dracula* is the

¹ Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996).

² *Ibid.*, 101.

³ Maggie Kilgour, “The Artist as Goth,” in *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 194.

⁴ William Hughes, “Victorian Medicine and the Gothic,” in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 198.

⁵ Jerrold E. Hogle, *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁶ Carol Margaret Davison, “The Victorian Gothic and Gender,” in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 136.

personification of modern materialism.⁷ Most important of all, Judith Halberstam has analysed the problematic “Other” in both novels.⁸ All of these themes have been handled by countless researchers, and are still the most discussed in the modern critical debate of these two novels. Yet, a more extensive analysis of the fears the monsters (as well as other characters) represent in the novels, often indirectly through the issues surrounding science, sexuality, or the Other, has mainly been left untouched. Similarly, these anxieties that the novels convey have hardly ever been contextualised in the reception of these novels during the time they were published. Reviewers and literary critics from the nineteenth century provide a unique perspective when it comes to the fears felt by the nineteenth-century audience of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*.

While *Frankenstein*'s Monster and the bloodthirsty *Dracula* may invoke many fears in the other characters of the novel, said characters themselves (and others) may represent fears that were experienced by nineteenth-century members of society. Even though the fears represented in *Frankenstein* may not exactly be the same fears expressed in *Dracula*, together, they present an interesting insight into the nineteenth-century societal mindset. The huge popularity of these novels, as well as the enormous critical impact they have even nowadays, with new discussions arising almost every day, make *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* especially suitable for looking into the similarities and differences between the fears and anxieties of the early and late-nineteenth-century societies, as the novels were published nearly eighty years apart. The comparison of the fears found in the contemporary reviews to those found in modern critical readings, then, provides interesting insights into the differences in perception and interpretation two hundred years can make.

⁷ Maggie Kilgour, “Past and Present,” in *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 12.

⁸ Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

In order to establish this picture, this thesis will strive to answer the following question: “What nineteenth-century societal fears do the characters in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus* and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* represent according to contemporary reviews, and how and why do these differ from fears discussed in modern critical readings of the novels?” This question will be divided into several smaller questions, so as to create a clear understanding of the novels. Chapter 1 will aim to provide an answer to the question “What differences can be seen between the fears felt by early nineteenth-century society and late nineteenth-century society?” Because *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* were written nearly eighty years apart, this chapter will establish the differences, and similarities, between (fears and anxieties of) the early and late nineteenth century societies, as well as try to determine why those fears were felt during that time. By consulting primary and secondary sources on the era, this chapter will ascertain a thorough understanding of the century during which both novels were written and published. Through analysing numerous reviews from the early nineteenth century, chapter 2 will look at the fears felt by nineteenth-century British society upon reading *Frankenstein*. The reviews have been extracted from the scholarly website Romantic Circles,⁹ and have been selected on the basis of providing relevant information on early-nineteenth-century fears and anxieties. When a reviewer sees a certain passage of the novel as problematic, this can be seen as harbouring an underlying fear, and that review then becomes significant for answering the question of “what fears can be found in the contemporary reviews?” Chapter 3 will answer the question of “What fears can be found in the novel?” by analysing several passages from the novel and by consulting the works of modern critics and scholars. In chapter 4, contemporary reviews of *Dracula* from the late nineteenth century will be analysed, in order to uncover the fears readers experienced while reading the novel. All reviews have been found in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*,

⁹ Shanon Lawson, “The Mary Shelley Chronology & Resource Site,” Romantic Circles, March 1998, www.rc.umd.edu/reference/chronologies/mschronology/reviews.html.

Volume 304: Bram Stoker's Dracula,¹⁰ and have been chosen because they present relevant information on late-nineteenth-century fears and anxieties as can be found in Stoker's novel. Again, problems reviewers have found with certain passages of the novel can be seen as hiding underlying anxieties. Finally, chapter 5, will look at various passages from *Dracula* and analyse them for the fears that can be found there. In the conclusion, the following question, which is fundamental to answering the main question, will be answered: "Are there fears that are mentioned in the reviews, but not in the modern critical debate (or vice versa), and how can these discrepancies be explained?"

¹⁰ *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker's Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005).

Chapter 1

Although every era is one of change, the nineteenth century is marked for its radical and irreversible social and cultural transformations.¹¹ Even though the titular character in Stoker's *Dracula* states that "there is reason that all things are as they are,"¹² these developments and innovations seem to have had no precedent, and lead to fears and anxieties developing in the nineteenth-century society. With increasingly rapid speed, due to a stable economy, imperialism and colonies across the globe, a strong navy, and a solid political and social system, Britain became one of the dominant forces in the world, perhaps even the most dominant,¹³ at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The innovation of machines and the use of steam power created a dramatic increase in factory jobs, and made production considerably more profitable. These mass-produced goods were sold to nations all over the world, bringing in more money for the British treasury. This wealth could also be seen in a growing part of the British population: more and more people were able to save money because their wealth exceeded their primary needs. Still, this also caused a greater divide between classes: the rich were becoming richer, while the poor were still stuck in their poverty.¹⁴ The population grew exponentially, not because more people were born, but because more knowledge of and care for personal hygiene radically decreased chances of infection and thus mortality rates.¹⁵ People moved out of the country and into the city for jobs in the factories, a phenomenon known as urbanisation. An increase in economic welfare also

¹¹ T.S. Ashton, *The Industrial Revolution: 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 2.

¹² Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 23.

¹³ Colin Matthew, "Introduction," in *The Short Oxford History of The British Isles: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Colin Matthew (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.

¹⁴ T.S. Ashton, *The Industrial Revolution: 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

meant that literature, art, and culture could flourish, all of which have contributed substantially to the international popularity of the British nineteenth century.¹⁶

But although Britain as a nation thrived, this cannot be said of a significant part of the country's population. Despite the fact that the living and working conditions of most British factory workers were abominable, the majority of society valued hard work over almost everything else. This ultimately led to the drawing up of rules and laws in society (also called codification), accompanied by rules on how to behave yourself. Rules and codification facilitated labour, and made it even more profitable. The establishing of rules was also influenced by evangelicalism (which promoted a life of faith and rules), and the intricate division of labour within social living.¹⁷ Hereby, the British class system came into being, although it consisted of more categories than we are nowadays aware of.¹⁸ However, because social worth was partly based on financial worth, the nineteenth century also knew one of the highest rates of vertical mobility in history.¹⁹ This categorization was extended to the rest of the world during the second half of the century, and people were grouped into races. This idea was founded on Social Darwinism and the concept of natural selection, and the British often felt superior to other cultures, especially ones they had colonized.²⁰ This idea is clearly demonstrated in "Aboriginals" by Anthony Trollope (1873), when, talking about the indigenous people of Australia, he states that "These people were in total ignorance of the use of metals, they went naked, they ill-used their women, they had no houses, they produced nothing from the soil. They had not even flint arrow-heads. They practised infanticide. In some circumstances of life they practised cannibalism. They were and are savages of the

¹⁶ Colin Matthew, "Introduction," in *The Short Oxford History of The British Isles: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Colin Matthew (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 37.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁹ T.S. Ashton, *The Industrial Revolution: 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1967, 16.

²⁰ Colin Matthew, "Introduction," in *The Short Oxford History of The British Isles: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Colin Matthew (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 28-29.

lowest kind.”²¹ This is further illustrated by Joseph Chamberlain’s speech “The True Conception of Empire” (1897), in which he urged the British nation to “let it be [their] task, to keep alight the torch of Imperial patriotism, to hold fast the affection and the confidence of [their] kinsmen across the seas, that so in every vicissitude of fortune the British Empire may present an unbroken front to all her foes, and may carry on even to distant ages the glorious traditions of the British flag.”²² A concept that is tied in with Social Darwinism is degeneration theory, which can be considered the opposite of evolution theory. Degeneration meant that a person could “devolve” into a simpler, lesser being, which could be brought forth by social contact with other lesser beings, such as criminals or foreigners.²³

The desire to make the United Kingdom the prime example of how a community should function and behave was rooted deeply in British society.²⁴ One aspect on which the British prided themselves was education. The United Kingdom was home to two excellent universities, Oxford and Cambridge, and although mainly upper-class children attended university, working and middle-class children, too, sometimes received an education. During the second half of the century, education even became compulsory.²⁵ Due to the schooling that working-class children received, an increasing number of working-class people became literate, much to the dislike of some members of the clergy, who were concerned that a reading working class would lead to protests against the established order.²⁶ Education brought more problems: there were discrepancies in what the Christian church wanted people to learn, what industrial society needed people to learn, and what different classes with

²¹ Anthony Trollope, “Aboriginals,” 1873, in *Empire Writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature*, ed. Elleke Boehmer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 25.

²² Joseph Chamberlain, “The True Conception of Empire” (speech, London, 31 March 1897), in *Empire Writings: An Anthology of Colonial Literature*, ed. Elleke Boehmer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 215.

²³ Kelly Hurley, “British Gothic Fiction, 1885-1930,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 196-7.

²⁴ Colin Matthew, “Introduction,” in *The Short Oxford History of The British Isles: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Colin Matthew (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 37.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

different values wanted schools to encourage. Although the religious and industrial needs could to some extent be combined, the variation in class values proved to be too great to be joined.²⁷

Despite the United Kingdom having a rigid class structure, colonies in all parts of the world, a booming economy, and a rich cultural and artistic legacy, the centre of all this was remarkably chaotic. London looked nothing like an imperial city, nor did the British seem to care very much about it looking like one. Although the city government did have a few grand buildings erected, spending tax money on other national projects was seen as an unnecessary splurge.²⁸ The only way in which London changed dramatically during the nineteenth century was underground, as tubes for water, postage, sewage, and transport were built below the streets of the capital.²⁹ But nearing the end of the century, the *fin-de-siècle*, London was to become the centre of rapid changes in technology. The era was the birthplace of the telephone, the radio, the cinema, electricity, and means of transportation such as the bicycle and the automobile. Although the golden age of these products would not occur until about a decade later, it was a popular subject in *fin-de-siècle* literature, in which technology often featured as something which humanity could not control, and eventually would be ruined by.³⁰ But the threat that was presented by the products of progress was felt not only in the realm of technology. The masculine Victorian society also felt threatened by the emergence of the New Woman, a somewhat manly woman “owing some of her character to the fallen woman of the mid-Victorian period, and some to the campaigners on women’s rights.”³¹ The (stereo)typical New Woman was sexually assertive, had a job, and fought for women’s rights,

²⁷ Ibid., 35-36.

²⁸ Ibid., 13.

²⁹ Ibid., 13-14.

³⁰ Ibid., 295.

³¹ Gail Marshall, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4.

undermining all the established nineteenth-century gender roles.³² The replacement of religion by science, the old idea of creationism being displaced by evolutionism, and the belief in degeneration put further strain on people's already faltering religious beliefs in a society troubled by Social Darwinism.³³ The anxiety people felt over a fast-changing world was a popular topic in *fin-de-siècle* literature, which tried to make sense of contemporary society.

The *fin-de-siècle* novel that was concerned with social anxieties can be seen as a genre in itself, but it is still part of the Victorian literature. Although the medium of the novel established itself as such during the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century is responsible for the development of the novel as we know it today.³⁴ As a result of the Industrial Revolution, there was an increasing amount of literate readers, and a cheaper way to produce paper and books. The taxes on newspapers were abolished, and distributing reading materials became more efficient³⁵ (think of libraries)³⁶, leading to a growing popularity in reading. The growing number of readers was also a result of the many changes the Industrial Revolution brought with it: in order to keep up with the pace of a fast-changing world, reading became a consumerist and distractionist practice, promoting reading extensively and superficially, rather than intensively.³⁷ This rise in literary consumption involved a changing attitude towards reading during the beginning of the second half of the century: it became fashionable to read, and people used the literature they did or did not read as a way to distinguish themselves within society and within their own class.³⁸ This system was further extended by the establishment of a centre and a periphery as contrasting entities, especially geographically:

³² Carol Margaret Davison, "The Victorian Gothic and Gender," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 125.

³³ Nicholas Ruddick, "The Fantastic Fiction of the Fin de Siècle," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 190.

³⁴ Nicholas Seager, *The Rise of the Novel* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 17.

³⁵ Kate Flint, "Literature, Music, and the Theatre," in *The Short Oxford History of the British Isles*, ed. Colin Matthew (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 230.

³⁶ Franco Moretti, "The Novel: History and Theory," *New Left Review* 52 (2008): 121.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 121-22.

³⁸ Kate Flint, "Literature, Music, and the Theatre," in *The Short Oxford History of the British Isles*, ed. Colin Matthew (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 230.

the city versus the rural, London versus the provinces, England versus its colonies.³⁹ These ideas were then further developed within literature itself, with rurality representing simple, pure life, in which the social ordering was fixed, and with the city, especially London, representing power and danger: living in London meant living with a constant threat of losing everything, regardless of how hard you worked for it.⁴⁰ The distinction between centre and periphery became less clear close to the end of the century. Members from all layers of society voiced their opinions in literature, be it obvious or concealed, and the rigid class structure the Victorians had worked so hard to maintain started to wobble.⁴¹

Although a lot of these social, national, and personal struggles at the end of century were addressed through the literary genre of realism, meaning that it presented the reality of its readers, some struggles were too controversial or too shocking to be put into words without “softening the blow”. In order to still address late-nineteenth-century society’s problems, and fuelled by a growing public interest in psychology,⁴² Gothic writers discussed these taboos by wrapping the struggles of their society, nation, or individual in a narrative filled with supernatural occurrences and symbolism.⁴³ Although the fin de siècle saw a returning popularity of the genre, the Gothic novel was not an invention of the nineteenth century, but rather of the century preceding it. Opinions on whether the Gothic is a genre or a mode are divided, mainly because, at first, Gothic novels seem to share similarities in style, theme, and ideology. But, upon analysing the books more closely, it becomes evident that many of the novels diverge greatly from each other, despite being all called ‘Gothic’.⁴⁴

³⁹ Ibid., 235-36.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 236-238.

⁴¹ Ibid., 253.

⁴² Kate Flint, “Literature, Music, and the Theatre,” in *The Short Oxford History of the British Isles*, ed. Colin Matthew (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 251-52.

⁴³ Nicholas Ruddick, “The Fantastic Fiction of the Fin de Siècle,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 190.

⁴⁴ David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: The Gothic Tradition* (Harlow: Longman, 1996), 7.

Still, all Gothic novels have one common theme which captures their audience like Dracula's hypnotic charms capture Lucy Westenra: terror.⁴⁵ During the eighteenth century, Great Britain stood at the foundation of the urbanisation and industrialisation that would be magnified in the centuries to come. It was the century of Enlightenment and revolutions, and both caused social tensions. Enlightenment and rationalism drove a wedge between the people and their religious beliefs. Although this problem would reach its peak in the late nineteenth century, eighteenth-century society already worried about the relations between humans and the natural, supernatural, and social realms. Revolutions caused social unrest, and in some countries led to more revolutions. The uneasiness this caused among the people of Britain was accompanied the dawn of the Gothic genre, which tried to cope with and clarify the changing world. It also tried to account for and reason with the mysteries that Enlightenment left unexplained, and used elements of a historical past to do this.⁴⁶ Although at first the Gothic was negatively associated with the Middle Ages and its "barbarous customs and practices, of superstition, ignorance, extravagant fancies and natural wildness,"⁴⁷ these elements later became the key features of the aesthetic of the Gothic novel, as did Gothic architectural settings, terror, awe, and the uncanny.⁴⁸ Almost all of these features can be found in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818), a novel which represents many of the fears that haunted the early nineteenth century.⁴⁹

The Gothic genre lost in popularity to more realist writers such as Charles Dickens and George Eliot for a major part of the nineteenth century, but was revived especially in the last decade of the century. Societal fears that had emerged during the hiatus between the birth of the Gothic novel and the Gothic Revival were aggravated, as were the pre-existing fears.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁶ Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996), 23.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 103.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 136.

Because of this, it is important to note the differences between the anxieties of the early and the late nineteenth centuries. As this chapter has shown, the beginning of the century was marked by tensions between social classes, and a fear of revolution and rebellion, while the ending of the century was marked by fears of the city, technology, sexuality and gender. Despite these differences, there are also anxieties which span the entire century, such as the fear of science and innovation taking over religion, the fear of abnormality (in any form) and the fear of Otherness. Nevertheless, the chapters in this thesis will show that fears of the late-nineteenth-century society can also appear in an early-nineteenth-century novel, and vice versa.

During the Gothic Revival, inspiration was again derived from old folklore, the monsters of the past. According to Fred Botting in his book *Gothic* (1996), the fin de siècle saw a surge in popularity for Gothic novels that focused on the ancient vampire as the villain. The sexual connotations that were attached to the blood drinking monster are a prime example of a social taboo at the ending of the nineteenth century, namely that of expressing sexuality, that needed symbolic masking.⁵¹ Undoubtedly, the most famous (or notorious) vampire in the modern world is Dracula, the charismatic demon created by Bram Stoker in 1897. Not unlike Frankenstein's monster represents early-nineteenth-century anxieties, Dracula embodies the fears and hidden desires of the late-nineteenth-century society, and it is exactly these two monsters and the terror they inflict upon the society around them that this thesis will discuss.

⁵¹ Ibid., 145.

Chapter 2

In 1818, Mary Shelley published *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* anonymously, and dedicated it to William Godwin, her father.⁵² Despite this fact, not many reviewers derived from it that Mary Shelley was the author, and attributed the novel to her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley.⁵³ Only in 1823, when the second edition was published, was Mary Shelley's name added to the title page.⁵⁴ Apart from the jubilant review by Shelley's husband,⁵⁵ who called the novel "one of the most original and complete productions of the day,"⁵⁶ *Frankenstein*, though considered interesting, received mainly negative reviews, ranging from "horrible and disgusting absurdity"⁵⁷ to "spirit-wearing"⁵⁸. The writers of these reviews, who oftentimes did not mince their words, paint a coherent picture of what was and what was not acceptable about the novel, with particular emphasis placed on the latter. The unfavourable reviews imply underlying fears in the society in which Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*.

A slight sense of xenophobia or feeling of English superiority can be felt in the words of the reviewer of *La Belle Assemblée* when he states that Genovese people "are not naturally romantic."⁵⁹ Later on, he calls Victor Frankenstein "vain"⁶⁰ because he wants to analyse "the

⁵² Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, 1818 (London: Penguin, 2015).

⁵³ Walter Scott, review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 2 (March 1818): 614.

⁵⁴ Nilanjana Gupta, introduction to *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley (Harlow: Longman, 2007), xxviii.

⁵⁵ Percy Bysshe Shelley, review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The Athenaeum* 263 (10 November 1832): 730.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Croker, John W., review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The Quarterly Review* 18 (June 1818): 382.

⁵⁸ Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The British Critic* 9 (April 1818): 432.

⁵⁹ Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *La Belle Assemblée or, Bell's Court and Fashionable Magazine* 2d series, 17 (March 1818): 140.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

cause of life and death.”⁶¹ From the latter, an instance of fear of science replacing religion can be felt. In the eyes of the reviewer, only God should have the power to create life and death, and mere humans should never meddle in such affairs, and the reviewer does not hesitate to call the novel “impious.”⁶² This sentiment is shared by reviewers of many different newspapers and periodicals, all of whom are appalled by *Frankenstein*’s audacity to try to equal God’s power. *The Edinburgh Magazine* states that there is an “impropriety” in a creation being made for any other reason than a religious one, and that the novel would have been better if the author “would rather study the established order of nature as it appears, both in the world of matter and of mind, than continue to revolt our feelings by hazardous innovations in either of these departments;”⁶³ *The British Critic*, *The Quarterly Review*, and *The Monthly Review* are all astounded by the novel’s lack of moral conclusion,⁶⁴⁶⁵⁶⁶ and *The Gentleman’s Magazine* is “shocked” by the idea of ungodly creation as a whole.⁶⁷ All these remarks from reviewers distinctly demonstrate the fear that science would replace religion, even many years before Charles Darwin would publish his *On the Origin of Species* (1859).

Several reviewers express their unvarnished opinion on the appearance and character of the Monster, as well as on its creator. The reviewer of *The Quarterly Review* calls Frankenstein’s creation “the ugliest monster that ever deformed the day,” and mocks him by placing the words “a most delicate monster” between quotation marks, as if it would be impossible for an ugly creature to have sensitive feelings.⁶⁸ Frankenstein himself, despite

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 139.

⁶³ Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany; A New Series of “The Scots Magazine”* 2 (March 1818): 253.

⁶⁴ Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The British Critic* 9 (April 1818): 438.

⁶⁵ Croker, John W., review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The Quarterly Review* 18 (June 1818): 385.

⁶⁶ Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The Monthly Review* 85 (April 1818): 439.

⁶⁷ Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The Gentleman’s Magazine* 88 (April 1818): 334.

⁶⁸ Croker, John W., review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The Quarterly Review* 18 (June 1818): 380-81.

being (indirectly, perhaps) responsible for the wicked actions of the Monster, is called a “kind-hearted parent,”⁶⁹ and “young man of the most amiable manners and extended acquirements.”⁷⁰ It seems as if anything the Monster does or says is unforgivable, initially for no other reason than his being ugly (and thus ‘Other’), while Frankenstein is pardoned in the blink of an eye. Even so, the reviewer of *The Edinburgh Magazine* at times sides with the Monster when he fondly addresses him as “poor monster” or “our monster” and vouches for his “natural tendency to kind feelings.”⁷¹ *The British Critic* agrees with *The Edinburgh Magazine*, and calls the Monster “very pitiable and ill-used.”⁷² Percy Bysshe Shelley in *The Athenaeum* states that the Monster was essentially “affectionate and full of moral sensibility” and that his evil doings are merely the product of circumstance.⁷³ Taking into account all the sentiments of the reviewers mentioned in this paragraph, it is safe to say that the opinions on whether the Monster is inherently evil or not differ significantly. Consequently, this shows a disagreement on morals on what is good and what is bad, as well as allude to questions concerning responsibility, as well as disclose a fear of what a lack of taking responsibility might mean. Additionally, the feelings of the reviewers condemning the Monster show a fear or hatred towards anything that is abnormal (i.e. socially unconventional) and that does not fit into a sophisticated society in which nothing should look or be out of the ordinary.

In quite a few reviews, the matter of the Monster learning how to read and speak through imitation is recalled sceptically. Not only do the reviewers doubt whether teaching

⁶⁹ Ibid., 82.

⁷⁰ Walter Scott, review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 2 (March 1818): 615.

⁷¹ Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany; A New Series of "The Scots Magazine"* 2 (March 1818): 251-53.

⁷² Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The British Critic* 9 (April 1818): 435.

⁷³ Percy Bysshe Shelley, review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The Athenaeum* 263 (10 November 1832): 730.

yourself in such a manner is even possible (“rather prolix and unnatural”⁷⁴),⁷⁵ but they deem it highly unlikely that a “hideous demon”⁷⁶ such as the Monster should be interested in the works of Werther, Plutarch, and Volney.⁷⁷ Moreover, the reviewer of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* remarks that the Monster appreciating such works makes the reader “familiarize” too much with it, and it is clear that the reviewer does not want to be associated with such an abominable creature. The reviewer’s choice of words (“hideous demon”⁷⁸) and his revulsion at the world of the Monster and his own world mingling show a fear of the abnormal, and especially the abnormal bleeding into civilised society.

A dislike (or fear) of what the reviewer of *The Edinburgh Magazine* described as the novel being written in the “highest style of caricature and exaggeration”⁷⁹ can be seen in the reviews. The same reviewer claimed that “as the world around us has again settled into its old dull state of happiness and legitimacy, [the reader] can be satisfied with nothing in fiction that is not highly coloured and exaggerated,”⁸⁰ so exaggeration need not necessarily be a bad thing. However, all reviewers who recognised the writings as coming from Mary Shelley’s hand agree that such a tale having been written by a woman is most certainly a bad thing. The reviewer of *The British Critic* states that “the prevailing fault of the novel” is the fact that the female author “[forgets] the gentleness of her sex” and the reviewer therefore “[dismisses] the novel without further comment.”⁸¹ *The London Literary Gazette* criticizes *Frankenstein* on the fact that, though written by a female, it is not “characteristic” of the “female” traits of

⁷⁴ Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *La Belle Assemblée or, Bell’s Court and Fashionable Magazine* 2d series, 17 (March 1818): 140.

⁷⁵ Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The Literary Panorama and National Register* 8 (1 June 1818): 413.

⁷⁶ Walter Scott, review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 2 (March 1818): 617.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany; A New Series of “The Scots Magazine”* 2 (March 1818): 249.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The British Critic* 9 (April 1818): 438.

other works written by women (“tact, feeling, the thoughtfulness born of feeling, a keen perception of the ridiculous, or a touching appeal to sympathy.”⁸²) It is evident that reviewers did not appreciate a female writing something “unfeminine,” and it depicts a fear of women overstepping boundaries set for them by society.

The reviews discussed in this chapter show that nineteenth century reviewers (and thus society) had fears of the following: strangers/foreigners, the replacement of religion by science, abnormality (and abnormality leaking into “normal” society), and women “breaking free” of social conventions. These findings, findings on the fears in the novel itself and modern readings of the novel will be put side by side and compared in chapter three.

⁸² Review of *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, by Mary Shelley, *The London Literary Gazette* (19 November 1831): 740.

Chapter 3

In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818), many fears are represented by the characters and events in the novel. Although the answer to the question of who is the real monster is quite ambiguous, this chapter will look at both Victor Frankenstein and his creation (from here on called "the Monster") in order to establish the fears they embody. Fears that will be discussed in this chapter include the fear of death, motherly or womanly power, science, responsibility, ugliness or physical appearance, a lack of identity, the racial or religious Other, and fate. These will all be analysed by interpreting several illustrative passages from Shelley's novel.

It seems logical to start with the reason why Victor Frankenstein decides to create his Monster in the first place: his fear of death. This fear is easily explained by the death of Victor's mother when he is still a child, and it seems as if he is unable to cope with the loss of one of his beloved family members. He reflects that, after the mind accepts the permanent absence of the deceased person, "the lapse of time proves the reality of the evil, [and] then the actual bitterness of grief commences."⁸³ While at university, Victor becomes obsessed with life and death, and decides to try his hand at creating life himself from the body parts of dead people. If he were to succeed in this, it would mean that he could "banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death,"⁸⁴ or even that he could maybe resurrect his own mother. Inspiration for this may have come from the fact that *Frankenstein's* author lost her own mother when she was just a baby (Mary Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, died just a month after Shelley was born). In a strange way, Victor can be seen as the Monster's mother, being the one who has "given birth" to it. According to

⁸³ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, 1818 (London: Penguin, 2015), 36.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

Andrew Smith in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion* (2012), the Monster's awakening is almost "baby-like,"⁸⁵ as "his jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks,"⁸⁶ effectively placing Victor even more in the role of the Monster's mother. This motherly or womanly power of creation is exactly why Victor decides to destroy the wife he was creating for the Monster: a female monster would possess the ability to mother more monsters, as Jerrold E. Hogle suggests in the introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (2002).⁸⁷ The vision of mothers in *Frankenstein* turns even bleaker when Victor's wife Elizabeth is killed on their wedding night, meaning that they never had the possibility to make children, and that Elizabeth could thus never be a mother.

The fear of science arises from the fear of death, as Victor accomplishes the act of making his abominable creation through years and years of studying science, and eventually the Monster is born through this science. As Fred Botting states in *Gothic* (1996), Victor, somewhat arrogantly, tries to create life, replacing nature and humanity with science.⁸⁸ If you look at the text closely, there is nothing really supernatural about the creation of the Monster (Victor even states that his father "had taken the greatest precautions that [his] mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors"⁸⁹), but merely scientific, which makes it more realistic, and therefore all the more frightening. In *The Literature of Terror* (1996), David Punter states that emphasis is placed on the sickening wickedness of Victor's experiment when he goes into graveyards and morgues to obtain parts of dead human bodies to build his

⁸⁵ Andrew Smith, "Victorian Gothic Death," in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 157-8.

⁸⁶ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, 1818 (London: Penguin, 2015), 51.

⁸⁷ Jerrold E. Hogle, "Introduction: The Gothic in Western Culture," in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 10.

⁸⁸ Fred Botting, "Romantic Transformations," in *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996), 103.

⁸⁹ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, 1818 (London: Penguin, 2015), 44.

Monster.⁹⁰ According to Maggie Kilgour in *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (1995), this fear of science can only be seen as logical in a time during which machines, initially meant to alleviate the burden of human labour, made people lose contact with nature like Victor does.⁹¹ Yet, Victor does not notice this, but sees himself as a sort of human God, wanting to create a new species that “would bless [him] as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs.”⁹²

Interwoven with the aftermath of the creation of the Monster is the fear of taking responsibility, or lack thereof. Victor’s own lack of responsibility is, at least partly, caused by his sheltered upbringing, as, Kilgour claims, it prevented him from preparing himself for the real world.⁹³ In other words, Victor’s parents did not take responsibility in educating Victor on what is morally wrong and what is not. Victor himself claims that “No human being could have passed a happier childhood than myself,”⁹⁴ and that his parents were “possessed by the very kind spirit of kindness and indulgence,”⁹⁵ and that they were never “tyrants”⁹⁶ who told him what he could not do. Although Victor initially seems euphoric about the idea of his new “children” worshipping him, the outcome of his experiment proves to be much less rose-coloured. Behind this, there looms one alarming question: are all people responsible for their own actions? The monster partly seems to disagree, stating that his “vices are the children of a solitude that I abhor,”⁹⁷ ultimately caused by his creator. Victor, on the other hand, believes the monster is inherently evil, mainly because of the way he looks: in *Skin Shows* (1995),

⁹⁰ David Punter, “Gothic and Romanticism,” in *The Literature of Terror, Volume 1: The Gothic Tradition* (Harlow: Longman, 1996), 107.

⁹¹ Maggie Kilgour, “The Artist as Goth,” in *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 195.

⁹² Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, 1818 (London: Penguin, 2015), 47.

⁹³ Maggie Kilgour, “The Artist as Goth,” in *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 201-2.

⁹⁴ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, 1818 (London: Penguin, 2015), 29.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, 1818 (London: Penguin, 2015), 148.

Judith Halberstam states that the determination that ugliness and evilness went hand in hand was not foreign to nineteenth-century society.⁹⁸ Indeed, according to theories on physiognomy by Cesare Lombroso, the criminality of a person could be shown through facial features, the shape of the skull, and the body, as Jenny Bourne Taylor quotes in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*.⁹⁹

Undeniably, one of the most prominent fears in the novel is the fear of ugliness. The physical features Victor has chosen for his Monster he once considered beautiful, but as soon as the Monster opens his eyes, Victor is revolted at the sight: “His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.”¹⁰⁰ Without knowing anything about the Monster, his intentions or his feelings, Victor rejects him, and curses the day the Monster was ever born, solely based on his physical appearance, and throughout the novel, the Monster is rejected by everyone he encounters. Eventually, he starts to believe that he is indeed ugly, even though he feels that he should be treated kindly, as he never meant anyone any harm. There is only one character in the entire novel who “sees” the goodness in the Monster and who is not completely appalled by him at first sight: Mr De Lacey, the father of the household the Monster observes from his hiding place. De Lacey is blind, and therefore cannot see the ugliness of the Monster, so he believes the Monster to be a good man based on his manners and his words. According to Halberstam, the blindness of De Lacey can also be seen as the blindness of the reader: the reader tends to sympathise with the

⁹⁸ Judith Halberstam, “Making Monsters: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*,” in *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 43-4.

⁹⁹ Jenny Bourne Taylor, “Psychology at the Fin de Siècle,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 14.

¹⁰⁰ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, 1818 (London: Penguin, 2015), 50.

Monster, as they cannot see his repulsiveness.¹⁰¹ This makes it difficult to instill the fear of ugliness into the reader, but the novel's characters, who notice the Monster's hideousness all too well, have no problem fearing and scorning him. In stark contrast to this stands Safie, Felix De Lacey's fiancée. Like the Monster, she, too, is a stranger in a strange land, but is welcomed with open arms by Felix's family, because her appearance is not offensive to anyone. This confirms the fact that the fear of the Monster is often solely based on his looks. In other words, there is a certain fear of the East present in *Frankenstein*.

Rejected by all humans he has come across in his short life (most of all by his own creator), the Monster develops a fear of its own: the fear that he has no identity, that he is no one. Living in isolation, the Monster wants to belong to a group of people, maybe even a family. For a brief moment, he is convinced that maybe the De Lanceys will accept him, but is rudely awakened from this dream when Felix De Lacey drives him off, and he feels his "heart [sink] within [him] as with bitter sickness."¹⁰² He begins to wonder at his own identity: "Who was I? What was I? Whence did I come?"¹⁰³ He identifies with both Adam and Satan (and could be said to turn from Adam, the first son of the creator, into Satan, the destructor and enemy of his creator), as he has read about them in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, but is never given a name, adding to his lack of identity. The only thing that the Monster is certain of, is that he is different in the most miserable way, "hideously deformed and loathsome."¹⁰⁴ The Monster's fear suggests a societal fear for anything and everything that is out of the ordinary, that does not comply to society's standards.

Elaborating on the dissimilarity of the Monster and everyone else, throughout the novel, there is an almost tangible fear for the Other, here defined as being from a different

¹⁰¹ Judith Halberstam, "Making Monsters: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," in *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 39.

¹⁰² Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, 1818 (London: Penguin, 2015), 135.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 128.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

race or religion. The first character that comes to mind when talking about the Other in *Frankenstein*, is of course the Monster himself. His skin is described as “yellow,” immediately setting him apart from the rest of the (white-skinned) characters in the novel. Given his grotesque physique and Victor’s disgust at the colour of his Monster’s skin, yellow is not a good colour. The Monster is classified as a separate race in a negative sense even more when Victor destroys the wife he had been making for his creature, thinking that, if the Monster and his new wife were to desire children, a “race of devils would be propagated upon the earth.”¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the Monster is not the only one who is discriminated on the basis of his race: there are some other, be it minor, characters in the novel who suffer the same fate. The first instance of discrimination occurs when Victor’s mother decides to adopt Elizabeth Lavenza, who would later become Victor’s wife. Although the other children in Elizabeth’s foster family are described as “dark-eyed, hardy little vagrants,”¹⁰⁶ Elizabeth herself is said to be “of a different stock [...] thin, and very fair,” with hair of the “brightest living gold” and “cloudless” blue eyes.¹⁰⁷ It does not take long for Caroline Frankenstein to prefer Elizabeth “far above all the rest.”¹⁰⁸ Again, physical appearance seems to be inextricably tied to the inherent goodness of people, as Elizabeth is claimed to be the daughter of a Milanese nobleman. The daughter of a Turkish merchant, Safie, Felix De Lancey’s fiancée, is of Turkish descent. Yet it is not she who is discriminated against, but it is she doing the judging based on religion. Safie’s mother bids her daughter not to marry a Muslim man, because, as a Muslim wife, she would be unable to pursue “higher powers of intellect and independence of spirit.”¹⁰⁹ From this speaks a critique of the Islamic religion, and it presents the Christian world in which Felix, Agatha, and their father live as a “safe haven” from the savagery of the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 170.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 26.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 123.

East, as Joseph W. Lew states in “The Deceptive Other”.¹¹⁰ The cases of the Monster, Elizabeth, and Safie point to racial issues in society, as it is always the white individual who is preferred above all the rest.

An anxiety that ties in all the fears established above, is the fear of fate, which befalls nearly all characters in *Frankenstein*. According to Halberstam’s *Skin Shows* (1995), Elizabeth, being the daughter of a nobleman, is destined to marry Victor, and this ultimately leads to her death. Justine is of a lowlier birth, therefore destined to stay a servant and be tried for William Frankenstein’s murder because of it, and eventually found guilty and executed instead of the real murderer, the Monster.¹¹¹ Victor lacks responsibility because of his upbringing, creates a living being, and then abandons and isolates it, damning himself to the same fate as his creature. The Monster is simply hideous, and later vicious, fated to be rejected by everyone in his life. Altogether, the lives of the characters seem to be planned out from the moment they were born, unable to change anything.

This chapter has laid out the ideas and interpretations of modern critics. The fears discussed in this chapter are epitomised by the many characters of the novel, although the Monster represents most of the fears, which outline some of the anxieties felt by the early nineteenth-century society, if not by Mary Shelley herself. In the conclusion, the fears found by the modern critics will be compared to the fears expressed by the reviewers from the previous chapter.

¹¹⁰ Joseph W. Lew, “The Deceptive Other: Mary Shelley’s Critique of Orientalism in *Frankenstein*,” *Studies in Romanticism* 30, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 255-83, quoted in Judith Halberstam, “Making Monsters: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*,” in *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 30.

¹¹¹ Judith Halberstam, “Making Monsters: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*,” in *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 40.

Chapter 4

When Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was first published in 1897, it was appreciated by the general public, who read it as an entertaining horror story, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote to Stoker that "it is the very best story of diablerie which I have read for many years."¹¹² Still, the novel did not enjoy real fame until more than a decade after Stoker had already died, a fame which still lives on today. According to Elizabeth Miller in "Publication History of *Dracula*" (2005), the novel received mixed reviews from critics in the United Kingdom, some admiring it, while others sincerely disapproved of it.¹¹³ Especially in the negative reviews, underlying societal fears are hinted at, displaying the countless layers of meaning in Stoker's novel.

One of the most remarkable is the reviewer who compared *Dracula* to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, stating that "*Dracula* is even more appalling in its gloomy fascination than any one of these."¹¹⁴ Several reviewers praised Stoker for his style of writing and his "rich imagination,"¹¹⁵ one even stating that "[*Dracula*] is also excellent, and one of the best things in the supernatural line that we have been lucky enough to hit upon."¹¹⁶ The intricate plot (and the fact that, in spite of the complexity, the novel was still comprehensible) was seen as a sign of Stoker's great literary competence,¹¹⁷ although the reviewer from *The Stage* thought Stoker "[had] gone too far in the introduction of

¹¹² Arthur Conan Doyle to Bram Stoker, 20 August 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker's Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 267.

¹¹³ Elizabeth Miller, "Publication History of *Dracula*," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker's Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 256.

¹¹⁴ "Review of *Dracula*," *Daily Mail*, 1 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker's Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 258.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, 259.

¹¹⁶ "For Midnight Reading," *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker's Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 260.

¹¹⁷ "Review of *Dracula*," *Manchester Guardian*, 15 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker's Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 263.

complicated details.”¹¹⁸ Many reviewers applauded the extent of horrific events in *Dracula* without the amount of bloodshed becoming nauseating,¹¹⁹¹²⁰¹²¹¹²²¹²³ but the reviewer for *The Manchester Guardian* felt there was an abundance of horror in the novel: “A touch of the mysterious, the terrible, or the supernatural is infinitely more effective and credible.”¹²⁴ This sentiment was shared by *Bookman*, whose reviewer “hurried over things with repulsion,”¹²⁵ and *The Pall Mall Gazette* called *Dracula* “horrid and creepy to the last degree.”¹²⁶ Thus, there is a clear dislike of horrific events, although it may not always be the events themselves that disgusted reviewers, but rather the underlying meaning of the events.

A fear of deviating from society’s established moral values can be seen in the bewildered reaction of the reviewer of *The Daily Telegraph*, W.L. Courtney, who cannot comprehend why Miss Lucy Westenra had been changed into a vampire. According to Courtney, Lucy had done nothing wrong in order to deserve such a severe punishment from the author: “What had Lucy Westenra done that her pure soul should be contaminated?”¹²⁷ Courtney stresses that, no matter how many horrors occur in a novel, harming an innocent woman is “too awful for [people with modern, ethical principles] to contemplate.”¹²⁸ In later,

¹¹⁸ Review of *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker, *The Stage* 848 (17 June 1897): 9.

¹¹⁹ “Mr. Bram Stoker’s New Story,” *Daily News*, 27 May 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 256-58.

¹²⁰ “Review of *Dracula*,” *Daily Mail*, 1 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 258-59.

¹²¹ “For Midnight Reading,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 259-60.

¹²² W.L. Courtney, “Books of the Day. *Dracula*,” *Daily Telegraph*, 3 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 260-63.

¹²³ “Review of *Dracula*,” *Glasgow Herald*, 10 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 263.

¹²⁴ “Review of *Dracula*,” *Manchester Guardian*, 15 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 263.

¹²⁵ “Review of *Dracula*,” *Bookman*, August 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 267.

¹²⁶ “For Midnight Reading,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 260.

¹²⁷ W.L. Courtney, “Books of the Day. *Dracula*,” *Daily Telegraph*, 3 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 263.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

more recent, analyses, the matter of Lucy's transformation and "punishment" has been read as an antifeminist scene, which will be addressed in chapter five. A similar fear is shared by the reviewer of *The Athenaeum*, who remarks that he dislikes the way Stoker describes vampires (and vampires in general) because "They lack the essential note of awful remoteness and at the same time subtle affinity that separates while it links our humanity with unknown beings and possibilities hovering on the confines of the known world."¹²⁹ In other words, Count Dracula is very much like a human, while at the same time he is a strange being with which humans do not want to be associated. The reviewer's feelings of repulsion towards a being like this can be seen as a fear of anything that deviates from societal norm, and a desire to eradicate such instances.

A sense of xenophobia and English superiority is implied in the review published in *The Athenaeum*: "The German man [Van Helsing, who is actually Dutch] of science is particularly poor, and indulges, like a German, in much weak sentiment."¹³⁰ Several reviewers mention the fact that part of the story takes place in Whitby, Hampstead Heath, and Piccadilly,¹³¹¹³² calling those places "homely."¹³³ This choice of words expresses a concern for such horrible things as a young woman drinking the blood of innocent children taking place in a modern, civilized, and most of all English society. Again, this suggests xenophobia: a foreign force (Lucy's transformation was caused by an enemy outside of England) threatens the calm Victorian lives of the English people.

¹²⁹ "Review of *Dracula*," *Athenaeum*, 26 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker's Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 265.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ W.L. Courtney, "Books of the Day. *Dracula*," *Daily Telegraph*, 3 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker's Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 262.

¹³² "The Trail of the Vampire," *St. James' Gazette*, 30 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker's Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 266.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

Although a few reviewers mention the modern-day setting of the novel in a positive manner (“That is the way to make a horror convincing.”¹³⁴), the reviewer of *The Spectator* does not appreciate Stoker setting *Dracula* in the present, as it “hardly fits in with the medieval methods which ultimately secure the victory for Count Dracula’s foes.” The reviewer states that an earlier setting would have suited the theme more, and it is evident that he would rather Stoker followed the Gothic conventions, instead of diverging from them.¹³⁵ Moreover, the negative manner in which the reviewer calls chopping off someone’s head and driving a stake through their heart “medieval” indicates that the reviewer feels that acts such as that are not tolerable in modern Victorian society, and that anything “uncivilized” is therefore despicable. It is worth mentioning that another reviewer, from *The Observer* this time, does not think very highly of the Gothic genre altogether, as he states: “it is impossible to congratulate Mr. Stoker on his theme, which can but feel to be one quite unworthy of his literary capabilities.”¹³⁶

The societal fears hinted at in the reviews discussed above (strangers/foreigners, feminism, but most of all divergence from what is “normal” in Victorian society), are evident in the novel itself as well. The next chapter will address and analyse fears found in *Dracula* by modern critics, after which they will be compared to the fears found in the reviews.

¹³⁴ “For Midnight Reading,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 260.

¹³⁵ “Review of *Dracula*,” *Spectator*, 31 July 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 266.

¹³⁶ “Review of *Dracula*,” *Observer*, 1 August 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 267.

Chapter 5

In Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), not only the sinister Count himself represents many societal fears, some of the other characters in the novel epitomise anxieties too. The fears that are most prominent, be it society's or Bram Stoker's personal fears, are a fear of sexuality (and female sexuality specifically), New Women, foreigners, degeneration, the past, insanity, and the city. This chapter will strive to demonstrate that these fears infuse the narrative by analysing passages from the novel.

In the novel, there are several women that express tendencies of transgressive female sexuality or modern femininity, something which instilled fear in the masculine-oriented Victorian society. The first character that comes to mind when talking about transgressive female sexuality in *Dracula* is Lucy Westenra, Mina Harker's friend. Before Lucy picks Arthur as her fiancé from among her three suitors, she writes to Mina: "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?"¹³⁷ It is obvious that, according to nineteenth-century standards at least, Lucy is "a horrid flirt,"¹³⁸ and it becomes clear that this comes at a price when she is changed into a vampire by Dracula. As a vampire, Lucy becomes "voluptuous" and "wanton"¹³⁹ and commands Arthur to come to her. In *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion* (2012), Victoria Margree and Bryony Randall claim that the words used to describe Lucy and her sexual assertiveness all indicate female sexuality, and, as this does not conform to social norms,¹⁴⁰ Lucy is killed by her own fiancé as three other men watch.

¹³⁷ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 68.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 245.

¹⁴⁰ Victoria Margree and Bryony Randall, "Fin-de-Siècle Gothic," in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 221.

The three other female vampires in the novel, Dracula's brides, are also all sexually aggressive, and accordingly undeniably vile, with a "deliberate voluptuousness."¹⁴¹ This is illustrated by the scene in which they try to seduce Jonathan, as the vampires state that "he is young and strong, there are kisses for us all,"¹⁴² and he feels "a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss [him] with those red lips."¹⁴³ According to Hogle in the introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (2002), the women thereby effectively appear to be "unmanning" him.¹⁴⁴ The severity of the offense of female sexuality is made even more evident by Jonathan's seemingly perfect Victorian wife Mina, who is the only woman still alive at the end of the novel. According to Van Helsing, Mina is "One of God's women [...]. So true, so sweet, so noble, so little an egoist [...]."¹⁴⁵ Mina seems to be the prime example of an ideal Victorian woman: true to her husband, obedient to all the men in the novel, caring, and feminine. She is the only woman who manages not to fall for Dracula's sanguinary advances, and is left blameless for drinking the vampire's blood because she is physically forced.

Still, Mina possesses traits that are traditionally thought of as masculine,¹⁴⁶ such as rationality, intelligence, and braveness, as claimed by Kelly Hurley in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (2002). This last characteristic is exemplified by Mina herself when she decides to travel to Castle Dracula with Van Helsing to help destroy the vampire that is keeping her in his power, aware of what a dreadful place it is, and despite her husband's objections. Mina claims she does not approve of New Women, as she writes in her journal: "Some of the 'New Women' writers will some day start an idea that men and women

¹⁴¹ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 43.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Jerrold E. Hogle, "Introduction: The Gothic in Western Culture," in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 11.

¹⁴⁵ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 218.

¹⁴⁶ Kelly Hurley, "British Gothic Fiction, 1885-1930," in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 202.

should be allowed to see each other asleep before proposing or accepting. But I suppose the New Woman won't condescend in future to accept; she will do the proposing herself. And a nice job she will make of it, too!"¹⁴⁷. However, her relative masculine characteristics (rationality, intelligence, inventiveness, interest in technology), as can be seen when she expresses her enthusiasm for Dr Seward's phonograph ("Why, this beats even shorthand! May I hear it say something?"¹⁴⁸), suggests that she is, in fact, at least partly a New Woman. Yet, although she is as much a progressive female as Lucy, Mina's punishment for this is much less severe: she does not change into a vampire, nor is she killed; she only temporarily falls under Dracula's spell, after which she is pardoned and lives a happy life with her new husband and their child. Margree and Randall state that the reason for this could be that Mina's masculine qualities are, in some way, useful to the men in the novel,¹⁴⁹ as Van Helsing praises her by saying: "Ah, that wonderful Madam Mina! She has man's brain – a brain that a man should have were he much gifted – and woman's heart."¹⁵⁰ Van Helsing's compliment makes clear that Mina is indeed intelligent, but that she is still an epitome of Victorian femininity. Mina confirms this idea as she writes in her journal: "I must stop, for Jonathan is waking – I must attend to my husband!"¹⁵¹ demonstrating her commitment to good wifely duties. Mina's plan eventually leads to Van Helsing and his men being able to capture and kill Count Dracula, and she is complimented once again, this time also on her female intuition: "Our dear Madam Mina is once more our teacher. Her eyes have seen where we were blinded."¹⁵² Thus, while active female sexuality is unacceptable and one of the anxieties the

¹⁴⁷ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 103-4.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 256.

¹⁴⁹ Victoria Margree and Bryony Randall, "Fin-de-Siècle Gothic," in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 221.

¹⁵⁰ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 273.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 411.

novel addresses, other New Womanly tendencies appear to be permissible as long as they serve men's purposes.

Of course, women are not the only sexual characters in *Dracula*: the titular character himself, too, is a sensual being, and his sexuality is often tied in with his being a foreigner. The fact that the vampire drinks blood by biting his victims is often seen as a sexual act, as Hogle states that Dracula “[penetrates] flesh with his phallic teeth.”¹⁵³ The scene in which Dracula forces Mina to drink from the blood in his chest is undeniably sexual, and it is a foreign man forcing an innocent English woman to do something despicable. As Dracula mixes the blood of his (English) victims with his own, his way of feeding can be seen as expressing a fear of degeneracy. From the very first moment that Jonathan Harker meets the Count, his physical appearance is described as “marked,” and his “aquiline” face “bushy” hair and eyebrows, “heavy” moustache, “cruel-looking” mouth, “pointed” ears, and of course “peculiarly sharp white teeth”¹⁵⁴ are not only seen as evil, but also as foreign, claims Halberstam.¹⁵⁵ According to Halberstam, Dracula's foreignness is attached to his monstrosity and repulsive sexual behaviour, as if all foreigners engage in practices such as those.¹⁵⁶

Moreover, the characteristics of Dracula's face agree with criminologist Lombroso's nineteenth-century ideas on the physiognomies of “criminals, savages, and apes”,¹⁵⁷ such as his “domed forehead”¹⁵⁸, which agree with Lombroso's “superciliary arches.”¹⁵⁹ In other

¹⁵³ Jerrold E. Hogle, “Introduction: The Gothic in Western Culture,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 12.

¹⁵⁴ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 20.

¹⁵⁵ Judith Halberstam, “Parasites and Perverts: An Introduction to Gothic Monstrosity,” in *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 13-14.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Cesare Lombroso, introduction to Gina Lombroso Ferrero, *Criminal Man According to the Classifications of Cesare Lombroso* (New York, NY: Putnam, 1911), xv, quoted in Judith Halberstam, “Technologies of Monstrosity: Bram Stoker's *Dracula*,” in *Skin Shows, Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995): 93.

¹⁵⁸ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 19-20.

¹⁵⁹ Cesare Lombroso, introduction to Gina Lombroso Ferrero, *Criminal Man According to the Classifications of Cesare Lombroso* (New York, NY: Putnam, 1911), xv.

words, Count Dracula is a foreign degenerate, and degenerates should not be allowed to taint English blood, which means he needs to be exterminated. Yet it is not only the villain who shows signs of degeneration: Jonathan, too, appears to fall victim to the decline of his own refinement. When Jonathan is being seduced by Dracula's three brides (two of whom are dark-skinned: another sign of the "evilness" of foreigners), he feels that his mind is too weak to resolutely resist the vampires, quietly wanting them to penetrate his skin. After he escapes from Castle Dracula, Jonathan suffers from "brain fever,"¹⁶⁰ and he goes quite mad for a while, which, according to Hurley, is an indication of degeneracy.¹⁶¹ The idea that degeneracy can also befall a civilised Englishman illustrates the fear that society had of the theory. It is interesting to mention that Bram Stoker was in fact not an Englishman, but was born in Dublin, the capital of Ireland. Because he spent a major part of his life in England, it could be that Stoker felt like the Other outside of Ireland, and that he in some way identifies with his vampire. As Robert Smart states in *Ireland's Great Hunger* (2010) the novel could then be read as an allegory of the Great Irish Famine, with the British (the "heroes" of the novel) oppressing and murdering the Irish (the "villain" of the novel) by withholding food (in the novel, blood) from them.¹⁶²

Jonathan's worries about losing his mind while staying at Count Dracula's castle is a prime example of the nineteenth-century dread society felt for insanity. Even before he is diagnosed with "brain fever"¹⁶³ (i.e. insanity) Jonathan is afraid the "nocturnal existence" is "destroying [his] nerve,"¹⁶⁴ and he longs to get out of his prison. This feeling is intensified when he is appalled at seeing the malicious Count creeping down the castle wall, and his

¹⁶⁰ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 115.

¹⁶¹ Kelly Hurley, "British Gothic Fiction, 1885-1930," in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 203.

¹⁶² Robert Smart, "Mapping the Imperial Body: Body Image and Representation in Famine Reporting," in *Ireland's Great Hunger: Relief, Representation, and Remembrance, volume 2*, ed. David A. Valone (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010): 68.

¹⁶³ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 115.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

logical brain cannot fathom it: “At first I could not believe my eyes. I thought it was some trick of the moonlight, some weird effect of shadow [...]”¹⁶⁵ Hurley states that in the everyday, mundane life of Jonathan, a normal Englishman, people do not creep down walls, and, being unable to just accept it, he panics.¹⁶⁶ The fact that even a rational, civilised man like Jonathan still has to endure insanity paints a very bleak picture for the insanity-fearing Victorian society, which, as Allan Beveridge and Edward Renvoize explain in “The Presentation of Madness in the Victorian Novel,” would preferably lock up all lunatics.¹⁶⁷ Of course, the most notable madman in the novel is Renfield, one of Dr John Seward’s patients in the asylum. Somehow, Renfield knows that Count Dracula is a vampire, and does everything at his bidding. However, he does seem to be particularly fond of Mina, to whom he speaks in a surprisingly sophisticated manner,¹⁶⁸ and does not want Dracula to harm her in any way, as Renfield himself states: “it made me mad to know that [Dracula] had been taking the life out of [Mina].”¹⁶⁹ This makes Renfield a difficult character to place: does he side with the villainous vampire, or with the “good guys” of the novel? Because Renfield appears to be most “himself” whenever he is speaking to Mina, it can be assumed that it is Dracula causing his insanity, meaning that, once again, the vampire embodies a nineteenth-century fear. According to Botting in *Gothic* (1996), Renfield’s lunacy can also be seen as a fear, or a bizarre mockery, of Charles Darwin’s theory of the “survival of the fittest”, in which stronger species eat weaker species in order to gain strength and survive.¹⁷⁰ Renfield’s eating of other species (flies, spiders, birds, and (almost) kittens) is done by him as a manner to become stronger, as “the blood is the life”.¹⁷¹ The whole scene becomes a parody because Renfield is

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 39.

¹⁶⁶ Kelly Hurley, “British Gothic Fiction, 1885-1930,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 204.

¹⁶⁷ Allan Beveridge and Edward Renvoize, “The Presentation of Madness in the Victorian Novel,” *Bulletin of the Royal College of Psychiatrists* 12, issue 10 (October 1988): 411, doi:10.1192/pb.12.10.411.

¹⁶⁸ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 273.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 327.

¹⁷⁰ Fred Botting, “Gothic Returns in the 1890s,” in *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996), 148.

¹⁷¹ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 164.

a madman, suggesting that only insane people would believe Darwin's theories. Because Christianity is essentially a virtue in the novel (a crucifix and a Host are used to ward off vampires, anything sex-related that is extramarital is shunned), it is safe to assume that Stoker did not appreciate Darwin's theories, and that he therefore makes them out to be a madman's fantasies.

A fear that may be less evident in *Dracula*, but one that is unquestionably there, is the fear of the past. Dracula, being a centuries-old vampire, is of course a personification of this past, and throughout the novel, the heroes, mainly consisting of doctors and lawyers, rely largely on the comforts of contemporary technology in order to defeat the ancient villain. When Dracula flees England by boat, an ancient mode of transportation, the heroes follow him by train, the essential modern travelling style. The typewriter and phonograph prove to be essential communication devices that enable the heroes to eventually destroy Dracula, because, as Kilgour states in *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (1995), "reading and writing [...] are antidotes to evil."¹⁷² But it is also the faith in science that causes obstructions, because, as reported by Jonathan in his modern shorthand journal: "unless my senses deceive me, the old centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere modernity cannot kill."¹⁷³ According to Dr Van Helsing, vampires are not a purely supernatural phenomenon, but, in order to create the bloodsucking demon "all the forces of nature that are occult and deep and strong must have worked together in some wondrous way."¹⁷⁴ Moreover, he states that the place where Count Dracula has remained immortal for so long "is full of strangeness of the geologic and chemical world,"¹⁷⁵ meaning that the question of how vampires are born lies somewhere between superstition (past) and science (present). In other instances in the novel

¹⁷² Maggie Kilgour, "The Reveries of a Solitary Woman," in *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 82.

¹⁷³ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 41.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 371.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

as well, modern technology is hindered by Dracula, a ghost of the past. Even though Dr Seward provides Renfield with the most advanced medical treatment known to the late nineteenth century, the precursor to psychology, he never manages to identify the real reason behind the madman's condition. In fact, Renfield's lunacy is caused by the proximity of Dracula, who represents a past in which mental health care did not yet exist. Van Helsing's spying on Dracula through the advanced technique of hypnotizing Mina eventually backfires when the Count cuts off his connection with Jonathan's wife. Continually, just as the heroes are about to obtain enough information in order to defeat Dracula, the ancient vampire's cunning deceptions crush all their hard work.

The horrors Count Dracula inflicts upon the heroes in London literally hit close to home; it makes out the city to be a cruel, unsafe place, and it speaks volumes about the fear society felt for urban life. The major part of *Dracula* takes place in modern London, where Count Dracula hunts on young English women. According to Margree and Randall, this makes the novel different from earlier Gothic work, in which the story usually took place in a distant past.¹⁷⁶ The first part of the novel does indeed take place in an area more closely related to Gothic conventions: Dracula's Transylvanian castle is built "on the corner of a great rock," and the Count himself speaks: "the walls of my castle are broken; the shadows are many, and the wind breathes cold through the broken battlements and casements."¹⁷⁷ In other words, the castle is in a ruinous state, which Botting states is a feature typical of the Gothic genre.¹⁷⁸ The gloomy atmosphere that haunts Castle Dracula follows Jonathan Harker to London itself, where the heroes track Dracula (and, at one point, Lucy) "through ruins, graveyards, and vaults,"¹⁷⁹ disrupting the modern bourgeois family homes of the heroes.

¹⁷⁶ Victoria Margree and Bryony Randall, "Fin-de-Siècle Gothic," in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 220.

¹⁷⁷ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897 (London: Penguin, 2012), 27.

¹⁷⁸ Fred Botting, "Gothic Returns in the 1890s," in *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996), 146.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

As Dracula turns Lucy into a vampire (and later tries to do the same to Mina), the spread of vampirism can be seen as a metaphor for the spread of syphilis, which, claims Richard A. Kaye in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle* (2007), was a fear of many in nineteenth-century cities.¹⁸⁰ According to John Frith in “Syphilis,” in the United Kingdom, syphilis was often called “the French disease,”¹⁸¹ signalling the belief that the illness came from abroad; another reason why Britain was deemed to be superior to other countries. As syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease, the fact that vampires have to be invited in before they are able to enter a house can then be seen as a sexual invitation (Lucy’s mother even opens the window, providing Dracula free entry), and, because the act of drinking blood is strictly sexual in *Dracula*, such as the scene in which Mina is forced to drink blood from Dracula’s chest, the drinking of blood can be seen as the actual sex. In *Dracula*, the city seems to be a place where only bad things happen, and it is a breeding ground of fears.

The many fears incorporated in Stoker’s *Dracula* tell us much about nineteenth-century society, and the everyday worries of the people living in it. Nearly all the fears discussed above are caused by Count Dracula, and he seems to be the embodiment of all that was seen as evil by the Victorians. In the conclusion, the fears in this chapter will be compared to the fears mentioned in the reviews from chapter four.

¹⁸⁰ Richard A. Kaye, “Sexual Identity at the Fin de Siècle,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Gail Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 58-9.

¹⁸¹ John Frith, “Syphilis – Its Early History and Treatment until Penicillin and the Debate on its Origins,” *Journal of Military and Veterans’ Health* 20, no. 4 (November 2012): 51, <http://jmvh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Frith.pdf>.

Conclusion

As this thesis has established, countless societal fears are to be found in Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Stoker's *Dracula*, as well as in their contemporary reviews. However, the fears represented in the novel as found by modern critics and those represented in the reviews are not always the exact same ones. This conclusion will try to determine and account the differences between the fears found by nineteenth-century reviewers, and those found by modern critics.

First of all, it is important to note that the fears found in *Frankenstein* differ partly from those found in *Dracula*. This can be accounted for by the differences between the two different periods in which the novels were published, namely the early and the late nineteenth century. Although it is also mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, it seems practical to repeat the differences between the early and late-nineteenth-century societal fears here. In the early nineteenth century, society felt a fear of class tensions, rebellion and revolution. The late nineteenth century was marked by fear of the city, technology, and sexuality and gender. A fear of science, abnormality, and Otherness can be found throughout the century.

With regard to *Frankenstein*, the reviews and the modern critical debate agree on several points: both express fears of foreigners, a fear of science and defying God, a fear of the power of women, and most of all a fear of abnormality. Especially the fear of science taking over religion and the fear of feminism are interesting, because they are generally late-nineteenth-century fears, as has been established in the first chapter. This shows that *Frankenstein* was a novel ahead of its time, which is emphasised by its author being a woman writing about unwomanly themes in a masculine-oriented society.

The contemporary early nineteenth-century reviews did not touch upon the fears of death, lack of identity, the power of mothers, and fate. Indeed, modern critics do read a fear of death in *Frankenstein*, and the fact that this is missing in the contemporary reviews shows a changed attitude towards it. Life expectancy has almost doubled since the modernisation of society started in the nineteenth century,¹⁸² meaning that society nowadays does not have to handle death as frequently as the nineteenth-century society. Lack of identity as a fear missing from contemporary reviews can be explained by the fact that society has become more individualistic since the nineteenth century:¹⁸³ it has become more important to distinguish oneself, so the Monster's lack of identity is indeed more likely to be seen as a problem or fear by modern critics than it was by contemporary reviewers. The fact that the power of mothers as a fear is not found in the reviews can be ascribed to a change in religious beliefs: contemporary reviewers saw God as the one and only creator, and mothers were merely a "vessel" for God's creation. Nowadays, faith in God has decreased even more than it did during the ending of the nineteenth century, and we ascribe more agency to the power of mothers and women in general. The fact that modern critics read a fear of fate into *Frankenstein* while it is missing from the reviews can perhaps be explained by an increase in pessimistic fatalism (the belief that everything in life is predestined, and that one has no influence over it whatsoever¹⁸⁴), since today's society has to live with the aftermath of two world wars and countless terrorist attacks such as 9/11, while early-nineteenth-century society had not yet encountered weapons of mass destruction.

¹⁸² "How Has Life Expectancy Changed over Time?" *Office for National Statistics*, 9 Sept. 2015, www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/articles/howhaslifeexpectancychangedovertime/2015-09-09.

¹⁸³ Henri C. Santos, Michael E. W. Varnum, Igor Grossmann, "Global Increases in Individualism," *Psychological Science* 28, no. 9 (July 2017).

¹⁸⁴ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*, s.v. "fatalism," accessed 21 July 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/fatalism>

Overall, the reviewers were immediately appalled at the Monster and his actions (and the fact that *Frankenstein's* writer was Mary Shelley, a woman), and seemed unwilling to analyse the novel in more depth. Of course, it is easier to establish the morals and mindset of a certain era in retrospect, as it requires a lot of self-reflective abilities to interpret your own era. Moreover, in two hundred years, critics have had a lot more time to analyse the novel than Shelley's contemporaries had.

In the reviews written on *Dracula*, many things are left unsaid when it comes to the interpretation of fears in the novel. While the reviews do discuss the obvious xenophobia that arises in the novel, they do not mention the fear of degeneration, the past, insanity, the city, or (female) sexuality. Especially this last one is interesting to mention, because while the disguised fear seems so obvious to readers today, sexuality is not mentioned once in all the reviews analysed in chapter 4. Perhaps female sexuality was such a deep-seated taboo in the nineteenth-century society that it was absolutely unmentionable. A fear which is also not mentioned at all is the fear of insanity, which is interesting coming from the century that created the lunatic asylum.¹⁸⁵ The missing fear of degeneration can perhaps be seen as being clouded by an overall fear of the Other and "lesser." The fact that the past and the city are not discussed as fears in the reviews is more difficult to explain, but can perhaps be ascribed to the chronological distance of more than a hundred years, in which critics have had more time to analyse *Dracula*. Neither the reviews nor the analyses of modern critics mention any fears that are typically ascribed to the early nineteenth century, showing the rapidly changing attitudes of the nineteenth century.

A disgust of bloodshed, on the other hand, is not mentioned at all in the secondary sources consulted for this thesis, while contemporary reviewers turned away from the novel,

¹⁸⁵ Allan Beveridge and Edward Renvoize, "The Presentation of Madness in the Victorian Novel," *Bulletin of the Royal College of Psychiatrists* 12, issue 10 (October 1988): 411, doi:10.1192/pb.12.10.411.

nauseous from all the horrific events. This shows a shift in what people find abhorrent, as apparently modern critics do not recoil at a little (or a lot of) bloodshed, but it mainly also shows a difference in how deep researchers dive into the novel to look behind this bloodshed, to look at its underlying meaning. The same applies to the fears of deviation from society's morals, uncivilization and medieval practices as expressed in the reviews: they are not mentioned in sources written nearly or even more than a hundred years after *Dracula's* publication, as modern critics seem to keep finding more deeper lying interpretations of the novel, able to step away from nineteenth-century morals and restrictions.

There is only one fear that can be found in the reviews on *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* and the two novels themselves: a fear of the Other. While in the reviews on *Frankenstein*, the Other is usually identified as the Monster himself, and while this certainly is true, the novel presents more instances of Others, such as the Eastern Safie. In *Dracula*, the vampire is always identified as the Other, although one review mentions a certain dislike of "the German man"¹⁸⁶ (Van Helsing, who is actually Dutch). As this fear is most obvious in both novels (Dracula is literally a foreigner, while Frankenstein has the physiognomy of one), it does not come as a surprise that readers from all three centuries picked up on this.

Of course, the fears discussed in this thesis merely give a hint of all the underlying meanings of the characters and occurrences in the two novels. The "infinite interpretability of the monster"¹⁸⁷ promises much more to be discovered by researchers about two of the most famous (perhaps even the most famous), timeless, and fearsome monsters even in the twenty-first century. Further research could include investigation into the differences between the contemporary reviews, based on political alignment, or analyse one specific fear in depth.

¹⁸⁶ "Review of *Dracula*," *Athenaeum*, 26 June 1897, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 304: Bram Stoker's Dracula*, ed. Elizabeth Miller (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005), 265.

¹⁸⁷ Judith Halberstam, "Making Monsters: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," in *Skin Shows* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 31.

So what does this mean? It means that from a distance of nearly two centuries, the fears in the two nineteenth-century novels are interpreted strikingly differently. Not only do the fears of the early and late nineteenth centuries differ considerably, so do the nineteenth-century and modern interpretations, and a lot of them can be ascribed to the time of two hundred or a hundred years modern critics have had to analyse the novels. A same difference can be seen in the two monsters: while Frankenstein's Monster can to a degree be redeemed because he possesses some qualities considered human, Dracula is a monster in its purest form, without a hint of remorse. Nevertheless, the monsters have one shared similarity: they have instilled fear in readers across three centuries, with many more to come.

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